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Fraternities of the field

By Richard Cobb

RICHARD HOLT:
Sport and Society in Modern France
256pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 333 25951 3

On his second visit to France, in the summer of 1789, Arthur Young noted in his journal that, throughout the countryside, from Dijon down towards the Midi, come the sound of guns popping off, as peasants and townsmen blazed away merrily at everything in sight, often with severe damage to their fellow-citizens. He rightly concluded that this was the most cherished privilege brought by the recent Revolution. Some fifty years later, the government of Louis-Philippe fixed the *permis de chasse* at 25 francs, and in the same year, 1844, approximately 125,000 such *permis* were issued, a figure more or less equivalent to that of the electoral roll. Six years later, it had risen to 150,000; and by the end of the Second Empire, this had doubled.

Weekend shooting, especially in the Ile-de-France and on the outskirts of other large towns, had become sufficiently popular leisure activity among clerks and shopkeepers for it to have provided Daumier with a whole series of caricatures on the subject of the perils of *la chasse* and of the inflated language of the urban Sunday *chasseur* (on the subject of which, a perceptive English observer, later in the century, suggested that *beaucoup de* could be translated as "one", *une confusion de*, as "two"). By 1900, there were about two thousand rifle clubs in existence, and, in the 1920s, there were well over a million licensed guns. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the figure had stabilized at around 2 million and has remained at roughly that level ever since. Only in Italy are there as many *chasseurs*.

As Richard Holt suggests, in this perceptive and extremely amusing study, there is an ambivalence about the French word *la chasse*, and its derivative, *chasseur*, that does not exist in England, because, in French, it makes no clear distinction between shooting and hunting. As shooting became more and more democratic, offering the clerk, the shop assistant, the minor businessman, the artisan, the tradesman and the shopkeeper the agreeable masculine illusion that he was providing for himself and for his family from the limited stocks of the countryside, the sport became less and less exclusive, though, in the best hunting laods (*les terres giboyeuses*), in the Berri, Touraine, Burgundy, the Ile-de-France, and Upper Normandy, good shoots continued to provide a form of upward social mobility to the new rich, to bankers and industrialists. *La Règle du Jeu* could reasonably be located in the Rambouillet area or in the Cher.

With the democratization of shooting, the old nobility and its more recent adjuncts took refuge more and more in deer and stag-hunting, and, in the Ardennes, in that of the wild boar. To distinguish themselves from the vast army of *chasseurs*, those who followed the once-royal pursuits of hunting began to call themselves *renards*. According to Dr Holt, there are some forty such hunts still in existence in France, most of them in the wooded and forest areas of the Ile-de-France, as well as in the East and the North-East. The *renards* have managed to retain their exclusiveness, thanks to the enormous costs involved in maintaining a pack, acquiring a uniform of green faced with black, and assuring such essential trimmings as the annual *messe de Saint-Hubert* (an ancient *renard* practice revived by one of the French Rothschilds) and the enormous suppers that constituted one of the rewards of the successful *renard*; the other, presumably, though not mentioned by the author, would be to end up, as in the words of the song, "dans la lit de

la Marquise". Indeed, apart from the costs and class distinctions, the other principal difference between the two forms of hunting would be that *la chasse* was exclusively masculine (and was indeed, and still is, appreciated as such), whereas stag-hunting could accommodate both sexes. One of the most celebrated huntswomen of the first thirty years of the present century was the redoubtable Duchesse d'Uzes, who combined aristocratic royalist convictions with an immense appetite for hunting.

The author suggests, in the opening sections of his book, that the social history of sport and of increasingly mass forms of leisure has up till now hardly tempted professional historians, though he acknowledges his debt to the pioneering work of Eugen Weber. His book was already in proof at the time of the publication last year of the excellent study of the Welsh Rugby Football Union by David Smith and Grenell Williams. He sets out most successfully to fill this gap, though he makes it clear that his study is not intended to include every form of sport practised in France. Fencing, for instance, so much favoured as a school of gentility for their shop assistants, by the directors and owners of the Bon Marche, is only briefly referred to, there is little on wrestling (*le catch*, *la lutte libre*) for which one needs to refer to the highly evocative memoirs of Robert Lagat, and fishing is perhaps too individualistic a sport to be included in a study of mass participation, though in France there are perhaps even more "fanatiques de la gale" (as Queauque called them) than there are fanatical Sunday *chasseurs*. Holt is principally concerned with association and rugby football, gymnastics, cycling and boxing, and he also has sections on cock-fighting in the area round Roubaix (if wish he had a little more to say about pigeon-fancying in the same area) and on bull-fighting as a predominantly southern sport, especially in the South-West.

Following Weber, he attributes the early French obsession with sport, *le muscle*, and physical prowess, to the disturbing effects of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. From the start, both gymnastics and rifle-clubs were closely associated with patriotic and revolutionary sentiments. Football were particularly numerous to the gymnastic societies which spread throughout the East of France and adopted such slightly dotty titles as *Le Réveil*, *Halle-Mil*, *La Régénération* (no doubt though than a cycling club rather unfortunately, if, in one sense accurately, named *Le Pédale Ouvrière*); these had such obviously nationalist connotations that, in the 1880s, Belgians were often excluded from membership.

That militarism and gymnastics were closely allied is indicated by the support given to the clubs by suc-

cessive Ministers of War, even if, as the author shows, physical prowess often did not constitute the unofficial attraction of these masculine associations. For many poor young men from the cities, for clerks, reps, salesmen and shop assistants, they were the pretext for a cheap excursion to some other part of France and for a mighty bean-feast on arrival. The State provided travel facilities for such occasions, which often ended in noisy drinking sessions. The tight-fitting striped silk outfits might also be a suitable manner to display rippling muscles and advantageous proportions. The young gymnasts of the 1900s, with their moustaches en *guidou*, might have stepped out of a picture by Monet. Even so, they often succeeded in putting in impressive outdoor displays; and the Church was soon converted to a recognition of what, much later, under Vichy, would become "une politique de muscles". Soon there were Catholic clubs that were almost as numerous as the officially patronized ones.

Football, both rugby and association, on the other hand, was first introduced to France by upper-class enthusiasts, many of them like the rather bizarre Georges de Saint Clair, one-time French consul in Edinburgh, with first-hand experience of Great Britain. Another even more improbable enthusiast for the many virtues of English sport was the former *communiard* Pascal Oroussel, who, having spent ten years in Devon and Cornwall, had written a number of children's books in English (he had also endeavoured, not very successfully, to teach the future Georges V the rudiments of French while he was a midshipman at Dartmouth). On his return to France in 1880, Oroussel became one of the most powerful advocates of English team-games.

The early clubs, such as Le Racing and Stade Français (of which the reviewer was an active member in the late 1930s) began, and remained for many years, highly elitist, being composed of *lycées* of middle-class and professional families. Members of Le Racing, at one time, even played football in jockey caps, as if to emphasize the quite spurious connection with the prestigious and ultra-exclusive Jockey Club (almost as exclusive as the still surviving Jockey Club de l'Île Maurice). Football spread inland from the Channel ports and from the wood towns of the North-East, the first two clubs were in Le Havre and Roubaix; they then spread to Rouen, Amiens, Berck, and, eventually, Paris. Their formation was generally due to the initiative of members of the local English colonies: shipping agents in Le Havre, textile engineers in Roubaix-Tourcoing, railway engineers and cotton agents in Rouen.

Rugby too seems to have owed its implantation in France and its localization in the South-West to the

existence of colonies of retired Indian civil servants in such places as Pau — long believed, together with Mntpellier (hence the rash of Mntpellier Crescents in English towns) to be the most salubrious town in France — Biarritz, and Bayonne. The game then spread northwards, to be taken up by anglophile or Anglo-French circles of the Bordeaux upper-crust. Quai des Chateaux, and in Bayonne and in Bordeaux, it was at first combined with rowing, as a summer alternative (hence the name of one of the most famous clubs of the South-West, L'Aviron bayonnais, which certainly has not seen an nar for years). As Holt perceptively comments, the French map of rugby (and of *le rugbyman*) corresponds quite closely to various forms of South-Western separatism, its traditions of "communalism" of intense municipal pride and self-holy, and of equally intense municipal rivalries between the small towns of l'Océanie, much of it dating from the eighteenth century.

In this part of France, rugby has given national fame and a tremendous sense of collective pride to such tiny market-towns as Quillan and Gujan-Mestras, in both of which the leading figures of the game were café owners. The final between Montpellier and Sète in 1929 was attended by the President of the Republic, Gaston Doumergue, himself a Protestant from the South-West. Rugby has remained quite narrowly localized, reaching up as far as Rodez, but failing to reach Marseille. It has become an integral, almost physical, part of a sense of identity, as in Basque, a Béarnais, a Gascon, a Catalan, or a Rouergois, familiarizing the Welsh and ourselves to the presence of enormous buffalo-like figures with abundant dark curly hair and wide, exceedingly amiable faces.

The connection between regionalism and sport is even more apparent when one considers the topography of bull-fighting, confined primarily to an area stretching from the Pyrenees to as far east as Nîmes and Orange. Unlike most other sports, bull-fighting has always been closely identified with parties and groups belonging to the extreme Right, and with such Fascist writers as Brasillach and Montherlant, and other affete intellectuals who have made a double cult of cruelty and hispanophilia. It is equally significant — and extremely creditable to that active and upright element in French society — that all the efforts undertaken to prohibit this disgusting sport have been initiated by Southern Protestants and Protestant organizations, including the Protestant-dominated Société Protectrice des Animaux. Holt gives the southern Protestants due credit in this respect. Predictably, at the time of the Affaire, the *cyclisme* was violently anti-Fascist. More recently, in its anxiety to maintain local popularity in places like Sète and Béziers, it has received enthusiastic

support, under the disguise of a "democratic" form of leisure and mass enjoyment, from local branches of the French Communist Party, never unwilling to play the separatist and regionalist ticket. The author does not dispute the generally poor quality of French *corridos* and the many scandals that have been the result of their mismanagement.

Equally firmly localized, along the Franco-Belgian border, in the suburbs of Roubaix-Tourcoing, is cock-fighting, now apparently on the decline, the "sport" failing to appeal to the young, while retaining the fidelity of the elderly. At its height, before 1914, the game even ran to having its own specialized newspaper, *le Coquelicot*, written largely in the Franco-Flemish patois of Tourcoing, closer perhaps to Flemish, and indicating a social appeal to the ambivalent population, mostly drawn from West Flanders, and turning less *frontriders*. The paper used even to carry marriage advertisements, and the enthusiasts of this peculiar sport apparently often intermarried, thus perpetuating and reinforcing the inbred nature of a semi-landslide type of mass spectator participation, the had never been legalized. There seems to have been some connection between cock-fighting and tobacco smuggling, though this is a social aspect of north-eastern leisure that is not discussed by the author.

It is curious that a sport so cruel should also have been so closely associated with the still vibrant enthusiasm, among the mill-workers of the Three Towns (Lille, Roubaix, Tourcoing) and the working people of Mons and Charleroi, for pigeon-flying and pigeon-racing. This is a truly Franco-Belgian form of leisure (the same could be claimed for *le cyclisme*), miners both sides of the border, in the Anzin basin, in the Borinage, and in the Lens area, having always been drawn to this form of summer evening or weekend activity, perhaps as a contrast to their own dark, underground work of existence. In the Nord, *la colombophilie* has also been traditionally associated with Resistance. In 1914 and again in 1940, one of the earliest measures adopted by the German Occupying authorities was to order, under the threat of very severe penalties, the handing in of all these racing birds. During the First World War, such birds as were not handed in were often employed to carry messages to British headquarters in Belgium, as well as to bring back French news sheets into the Occupied zone.

The author rightly concentrates most attention on what could certainly be described as the national sport of France: *le cyclisme*. This could take the form of the gruelling long-distance races, the earliest to be adopted: the dreadful Paris-Roubaix ("l'enfer du Nord"), half over cobblestones, the equally dreadful Paris-Brussels, the Paris-Bordeaux, the Paris-Brest, and the one-time Paris-Tours. But the most prestigious form of cycling is the territorial unity and of the variety of "Hexagone" (even though it may take in sizeable chunks of Belgium, West Flanders, or Northern Italy). One of the purposes of the Tour is to give a fleeting sense of national importance to small market-towns well off the main high-roads and awarded the valuable privilege of being at the start or at the finish of one of the daily *étapes*. The "Géants de la Route", the heroes of the greatest cycle race in existence, tend to be country boys, drawn from every region of France, their swift and immensely colourful passage eagerly awaited in the home provinces and through their native villages. Holt likens the Tour to a popular equivalent of the famous school story about the two Asiatian boys who set off to discover France on foot; and it is certainly significant that the longest Tour ever planned

An Old Score

Copious, conscious of that cold patch on my head where my fether's geese have made me almost bald I walk along the street where he dropped dead, my hair cut his length now, although I'm called poet, in my passport.

When I touched my ears he dubbed me *Paganini* and it hurt. I did then, and do now, choke back my tears — *W! air like that you ought to wear a skirt!*

If I'd got a violin for every day he'd said: *wee's this fiddle at my flowing hair!* I'd have a whole string orchestra to play romantic background as once more I'm there where we went for forced fortnightly elopement under new, less sheering, ownership, and in the end it's that that makes me cry — JOE'S SALOON's become CURL UP & DYE!

Tony Harrison

Safe

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and completed was that of 1919, in hymn to victory, after four years' interruption.

As in the national press and, even more, in local papers, the public eagerly studies each successive *éponge*, it acquires a sense of topography that tends to give new life to the great coloured maps of the French Departments that decorate village schoolrooms. In short, the Tour is a popular twentieth-century version of Expilly, as it flashes down mountain-passes, creeps up the steep slopes of the Mont Ventoux, or spreads across the flat, sandy Landes. It is as much a poem to the French Republic as the celebrated march of the *fédérés* from Marseille to Paris through the bright spring and the steaming summer of 1792.

No other form of sport contains such a clear assertion of national identity, though for the rider it is a geography lesson of quite killing sometimes literally killing — effort and offering little visual satisfaction. Bent face to the ground over the handle-bars, the rider is unlikely to appreciate the beauty of the green Pyrenees, the majesty of the Alps, the long straight roads of the Beauce or the poplar-lined *parc* of the Nord. Finally, the Tour serves as quite the most retentive of popular memory: there are Bobet years and Poulidor years, and even winner of the *maillot jaune* is likely to mark his given year or years far more firmly than the coming and going of governments.

Finally, there used to be such highly commercialized events as Les Six Jours de Paris. This series of timed sprints on a circular indoor track was one of the main features of the old Velodrome d'Hiver and one of the great social occasions of the inter-war years, mingling the extremes of classes in an agreeable frisson, introducing a fir-coated Tout-Paris to the exciting, yet alarming families of north-east Paris and its industrial suburbs.

French cycle-racing illustrates an evolution similar to that of association and rugby football. In the 1870s, cycles still being articles of luxury, cycling remained an elitist enjoyment indulged in by upper-middle-class youth of both sexes. Apart from the acquisition of the machine itself, it required the purchase of elaborate clothing, from head to foot (the ent-

logues of the great department stores stressed the importance of obtaining a complete outfit). But with the advent of the mass-produced machine, by 1900 *le cyclisme* was already well established as the sport of the common people. By 1914, there were 3½ million bicycles in France, a social revolution that released the peasant boy and peasant girl from the isolation of rural life, introducing them to urban values and enjoyments, news of which was reaching them, at much the same time, through the catalogues of *la Samaritaine* or *la Belle Jardinière*.

It was not just a matter of the prestige to be derived from success in racing. On the eve of the First World War, the bicycle had become one of the most powerful instruments of national identity. By 1926, there were about 7 million bicycles in France and by 1938, 9 million, a level that has remained fairly stable ever since. Two years earlier, in the summer of the Front Populaire and as a result of the introduction of the *congés payés*, working-class couples from Saint-Denis la Chapelle, Pantin, Aubervilliers and Montreuil could be seen setting out on their kingfisher tandems for a distant Côte d'Azur. Already in the 1920s, as he recalls in his memoirs, Lagaet had cycled from Paris to Déazeville in order to meet the family of his fiancée. During the Occupation, the bicycle became an instrument of survival, used by the townsman to scour *le plan* pays in search of eggs, butter and potatoes. It is significant that, in Paris, cycle shops are thickest on the ground in the XXème, the XXVème, the XIXème, and the XIIème, and that the capital of the bicycle is Saint-Etienne.

The history of sport is also that of popular heroes, slightly parallel to life, of working-class or peasant boys who, thanks to their skill, their prowess, their persistence and their courage, managed to escape from the trough of poverty and isolation, to see their names in lights. So much of popular identification with, let us say, *les Géants de la Route* is due to the endless and ancient appeal of the theme of the poor boy who made it to the top. Hence Georges Carpentier, *"le gosse lenois"*, the son of a miner, hence Terront, born in Saint-Ouen, the son of a mechanic, who eventually made good, married well, his best man a cycling-med Russian aristocrat.

But many more, having reached the top, toppled down the other side. Poor Jacquelin, the baker's boy from Méménant, carried shoulder high after winning the Grand Prix de Paris in 1900, "became a sad, impoverished drifter picking up occasional work unloading coal barges and dreaming of a come-back. In 1929 he was found dead after sleeping rough on the banks of the Seine in icy weather." Then there is the



extraordinary Senegalese, "Battling Siki", a boxer who "on one occasion... borrowed three lion cubs and with a friend took them to a café, where he proceeded to order five Pernods, one for each of the lions and one each for himself and his companion". Later he was murdered in New York. Earlier we hear of the splendid Léotard, an acrobat dressed in a pink body-stocking (un *léopard*) female admirers, of whom he had a prodigious number, and died of the pox in Madrid in 1870.

Less tragic is the story of Holt as told by the cyclist Brambilla: "After his third Tour in 1947, friends visiting his house unannounced found him digging a large hole at the bottom of the garden in which to bury the racing bicycle he no longer considered himself good enough to ride". A suitable commentary on the value, the simplicity and the friendliness of so many of these sportsmen, who, at the expense of tremendous efforts, sometimes managed to climb to an unsteady pinnacle of fame. Sport is as much the history of individuals, often highly eccentric ones, as of mass participation and popular leisure, and Holt's sympathy for individuals gives added warmth to a book which is also a brilliant and original social study.

He takes us also through some unexpected by-ways of Paris's popular history. I can recall the mass cross-country outings, organized by *L'Auto* and *Paris-Sport*, along the Cours de Vincennes in the 1930s; but I did not know that young clerks once used the Carrousel and the Buttes-Chaumont as running tracks. One thing I do miss is the annual waiters' race down from the Butte, each participant wearing a long white apron



and carrying a tray bearing a bottle and half-a-dozen glasses.

In his concluding chapter, Holt once more emphasizes the close connexion between French sport, the French café, and various forms of masculine groupings. Both gymnastics and *la chasse* could be seen as attempts to escape, for a Sunday, from the confines of domesticity and family, from wife or fiancée. In this respect the history of sports clubs, so often awarded the adjective *amical* (and, as the author says, this is a key word, to be taken literally, in the sense of masculine friendship) follows a course roughly parallel to that of local *sociétés savantes*. Each has tended to become a gerontocracy, gradually falling to attract a younger membership, with office-holders retaining their posts for thirty or forty years. *La chasse* has certainly managed to retain — even to extend — its masculine appeal. But the small local club seems to have entered on a long and no doubt final decline, in the same way that local café life has shrivelled, as the card-players of the Café du Commerce die off. The result is a great loss to the local savour and variety of French provincial life. How often, one wonders, nowadays would a group of men gather together for an evening jollity, cul-

minating in the singing of "Is pome à merde"?

A suitable epilogue to this excellent, enjoyable, and, on the whole, happy book would be a visit to the basement floor of the Bazar de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, in east-central Paris, with its own access to the *metro*, and which offers to the visitor perhaps the most dramatic visible source for the history of French sport at the present day. There could be no more eloquent commentary both on the democratization of *la chasse* and on the studied masculinity than the batons of lion-sized and very alarming brown-clothed *chasseurs*, zipped up, deep-pocketed, arch-protected from wind and rain, weighed down with deep pouches of rabbits and hares and squadrons of small birds. Clearly part of the attraction — and one acedulously cultivated by the cunning BHV — is the sheer joy of dressing up, and not just the several layers of thick clothes, but also all the attachments: baskets to be worn at the hip, *musettes*, shooting-sticks, not to mention the formidable weaponry itself, mostly double-barrelled. The *chasseur* stands, in the vast shop, against an artificial green background suggestive of tulgey wood and bleak moor, artificial pheasants flying through the air, attached to strings.

His paraphernalia is even more elaborate and complicated (and expensive) than that of other figures lurking in the same covered and over-laid neighbourhood: the fisherman, clothed and long-boated in waterproof green, the *campagnard*, the cyclist, in each case surrounded by a vast and suggestive array of peripheral equipment, allowing him to face up to every imaginable, or even unimaginable, situation: pots and pans, *bingaz*, tents, folding tables, chairs, beds, sleeping-bags. The French *vacancier* dresses for the job, the French *chasseur*, once he has left the temptations of the BHV wonderland, temptations to which he has fallen a massive victim, can take the *metro* feeling larger than life — he is a bit larger than life, under so many thick layers, he may even have difficulty in getting through the sliding doors of the carriage — and fully prepared to encounter a wild boar (the basement also sports a few fierce-looking stuffed *sauvages*, with wickedly curling tusks) in the Bois de Vincennes or in the little that remains of the woods of Fontaine-aux-Bois.

At her side, furthermore, she has her Teddler, Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that ilk, veteran of many a haggis-pie, no doubt, even of a dropped sauce-boat or two or a pair of unmarried "companions" staying for the week-end at the same time as the Moderator of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. ("In the circumstances I am sure you won't mind separate rooms.")

There are, in fact, two connected reasons that make it quite natural that a guide to etiquette in Britain should be put together by an American. To start with, the book of etiquette in its modern form (as distinct from the works of Castiglione and Lord Chesterfield) is largely an American product: the great names being Emily Post (first edition 1922 and still, I think, selling; there was a twelfth edition in 1968) and Amy Vanderbilt. More important is the fact that an etiquette book is needed by a special type of person, some of whose sub-species are particularly well represented in the United States. The type in question could be generically called *newcomers*, for they are people who have not had the chance to pick up the rules of social behaviour by use and wont from the first dawning of consciousness. Some newcomers are geographical, then: immigrants: others are economic, the newly rich; others again chronological, the young.

Debre's *Etiquette and Modern Manners* opens with some pretty fancy quotations: George IV is a natural choice, but it is a mild surprise to find Cardinal Newman, who spoke of an inward conversion at the age of fifteen as "confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena and making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator", hardly the language of a gadabout. Sensibly modest claims are advanced for the book, as it turns out. Its purpose, it is said, is to enable people to get on with each other easily, without friction or embarrassment. A grim truth is proclaimed at the outset, a slightly watered-down version of Dante's Hell: "a great deal of social life is not inherently pleasant".

To soften its impact, the first main chapters are a religious bias, while the second is a scheme of universal concepts as a framework for his lists. The *Lexicon* "has only fourteen 'semantic fields' of a pragmatic, everyday nature... Synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, and other related words are presented in linguistically appropriate ways without, however, demanding that the user be familiar with linguistic terminology... The definitions are supplemented with 'style labels' and examples of usage, tabular and piecemeal, having been added where needed. For easy reference, the material is arranged according to a system of letters and numbers, and there is also an index. The *Lexicon* comprises some 15,000 entries: the definitions of the words given are based on the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*.

The fourteen "semantic fields" or "sets" within which the clusters of items have been grouped include: Life and Living Things, Food, Drink, and Farming, Feelings, Emotions, Attitudes, and Sensations, Thought and Communication, Language and Grammar, Substances, Materials, Objects, and Equipment, Numbers, Measurement, Money, and Commerce, Entertainment, Sports, and Games, Space and Time, and Movement, Location, Travel and Transport.

ELSIE BURCH DONALD (Editor):
Debre's *Etiquette and Modern Manners*
480pp. Debre's Peering. £8.95.
0 905649 43 5

The name Elsie Burch Donald, exemplifying as it does the familiar pattern of Cornelia Otis Skinner and Francis Parkinson Keyes, strongly suggests that the editor of this guide to the complexities of social interaction is an American. But why not? What we have here is a work of Anglo-American collaboration like the invasion of France in 1944. I see Elsie Burch Donald as the Eisenhower of the whole enterprise, not perhaps altogether expert in the more front-line aspects of the thing, but an indispensably genial diplomat, preventing collisions and demarcating disputes between her gifted team of collaborators, jealously unwilling to hand over to their colleagues such items as the tipping of ghillies or the arrangement of eulogy.

At her side, furthermore, she has her Teddler, Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that ilk, veteran of many a haggis-pie, no doubt, even of a dropped sauce-boat or two or a pair of unmarried "companions" staying for the week-end at the same time as the Moderator of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. ("In the circumstances I am sure you won't mind separate rooms.")

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Absolutely comme il faut

By Anthony Quinton

James to Leslie Stephen on the death of Stephen's first wife. Such things give life and colour to a work of this sort.

A more worry expressed in connection with funerals is the tastelessness of crematoria, to which, it appears, 67 per cent of us now go on death. As a palliative they suggest a memorial service in a really glorious church.

The next large chunk of the book is taken up with entertaining, with how to behave at table, how to organize parties, how to invite and thank, how to have or be a guest in the house. Dinner parties should not begin before eight. Objection is made to, and remedies proposed for, that very frequent feature of modern life: "the prolonged and continual absence of the hostess" until she finally emerges with the first course in a slightly flushed and shiny state. There is a wildly funny picture on page 114 of four circles, each slightly smaller than the one to its left, and with nothing present to serve as a measuring rod. The caption reads: "2. Shown above: a dinner plate, pudding plate, intermediate size for cheese/salad, and butter plate". It is very much in the style of Beach-comber's statistical diagrams of the incidence of dandruff amongst kippers, dandruff, where there was sometimes a short squat polygon called "Fatty".

Mention of pudding brings into focus the fact that this book is not for complete beginners. Throughout "dessert" is raw fruit, "pudding" prepared dish you eat before the cheese (or after it, if a bit Frenchified), while a "sweet" is a wrapped object from a glass jar. An occasional, almost muttered, warning is pushed out through clenched teeth as we approach the frontiers of barbarity: on wine, "no no circumstances should glasses contain lumps of ice" and "wine is always sipped". Not that the book always takes its own advice: "The hounds are always referred to as *hounds*, not the hounds, or worse, dogs".

Certain hazards of the table are shied away from. "Corn on the cob is best reserved for family occasions". There is a very careful and penetrating discussion of how to get pass on to one's fork, with a page of confidence-undermining pictures devoted to the matter.

The onward movement of fashion has already rendered obsolete the assertion that "the cocktail is not often served nowadays", but not the accompanying suggestion that one should not use the phrase "cocktail party" in an orally administered invitation. The problem of children's parties is taken seriously, but some of their features are passed over in silence. With young children the tea that the host parents hope will keep the guests busy for quite a time whilst by in dead silence, with some platefuls of allegedly correct food being emptied in an instant, others treated as if radioactive. But on the whole the treatment of children is very sound. There is an excellent page or two on how to treat the children of a house you are staying at, also the admirable advice that if children are not specified on a wedding invitation do not bring them.

Has there been some intervention from the top and is Elsie Burch Donald drawing on American experience in her account of what a man should do in the way of hopping out and opening doors for a female passenger in his car? Or again when we are told that at the beginning of a letter "My dear" is considered somewhat patronizing in the U.S.? Given the extraordinary unwillingness of most people here to answer invitations, there is an American expedient that might be useful, that of putting "Regrets only" and a telephone number in place of the usual R.S.V.P.

Quite a lot of the book is devoted to precise formal technicalities where we are nearly all newcomers, in dealing with royalty, for example. A great tabulated array of information about correct forms of address goes into the thing most impressively, for envelopes, introductions, letter openings and place cards. The entry for children of Irish chieftains puts one in mind of Irish snikes: "Children of Irish chieftains have no special titles or designations". Only one thing defeats the compilers completely: what to put on the place card of the Pope.

There are chapters on sport (at Lords confine your comments to "well played, Sir" when near the pavilion), on how to treat servants (the ones you rent and the ones you find in a few grand places), on hospital visits (take robust plants that won't wilt discourteously), on social intercourse with. Menus. "The surest way to avoid causing offence is to pretend women don't exist at all". This last item comes in a chapter on business manners which is generally reasonable but, when on the subject of the telephone, fails to attack that disgusting practice of getting your secretary to ring up people with the words "Mr So-and-so would like to speak to you", inviting the

answer, "then why doesn't he ring me up".

I imagine that there are few people who would not learn something from this book, even if only the extent to which things have changed since their day. I found nothing wrong, really, apart from the anachronism about cocktails and the delectable idea that "when going to stay at a very grand house it is not correct to take a gift". Absolutely everyone likes presents, not least those who never give them, provided that it is consumable. Oddly enough the word "gift" crops up quite often, despite all the circumspection about pudding. Perhaps Sir Iain's consoling eye wobbled.

The impression the book gives of our society is of general delinquency, in which a few islands of ceremony are still unrodded: birth, marriage, death and the royal family. What it does lack is the qualities of verisimilitude, imagination which led Edmund Wilson to compare Emily Post's *Etiquette* to a Proustian novel. In that amazing work there are glorious social stereotypes with Bunyanesque names: the Worldlys, the Gildings (of Golden Hall), Jim Smartlington, Mrs Toplinny, Mr and Mrs Spensley Westmac, Mrs Oldname, the Upstairs, Mrs Onecore, all expressing their defining characteristics in an uninhibited fashion. In *Debre's Etiquette* this sort of concreteness is to be found only in the specimen announcements, as of the marriage which "took place" on Saturday at Holy Trinity Church at Amberley, between Mr Robert Smith, younger son of the late Major R. E. Smith and of Mrs R. E. Smith of 30 Lennox Road, London SW1, and Miss Hazel Jones of the Cottage, Amberley. I fear that Hazel will turn out to be a woman with a past and that Robert has been had.

Siegfried Lenz
THE HERITAGE

"Siegfried Lenz's novel is a colossal achievement. It contains a seemingly endless parade of striking images and characters who seem larger than life precisely because they are so beautifully rooted in life... a genuinely fabulous tale... It should be read by anyone who takes pleasure in entering a world so beautifully and completely realised that, for all its apparent aliveness, it rapidly becomes our own."

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Nina Baywood, *Daily Telegraph*

"*Xargos* is an unusual and exciting novel written in an elegant and stylish prose."

Pleaze Paul Read, *New Standard* £8.90

Secker & Warburg

Regenerating the roots

By Richard Griffiths

W. D. HALLS:
The Youth of Vichy France
492pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £20.
0 19 822577 6

"Education physique n'importe, éducation morale quasi nulle, éducation nationale oubliée — à moins qu'elle ne soit donnée à rebours, telle est la situation." These views, ascribed to Pétain and Weygand by L'Anii du peuple in 1936, go some way towards explaining the importance given to Education, and to Youth, in the initial policies of the Vichy Government. For the Right, but above all for the simplistic "silent minority" to which so many of the prominent figures of the new régime belonged, the French educational system had been in large part to blame for that decline in national morale which was a major factor in the defeat of 1940. The society of the inter-war period, devoted to enjoyment rather than to duty, had become engulfed by a "wave of materialism". The gratification of the individual had become more important than service to the community. "The only way to regenerate society was to start at the roots: with a new policy for youth."

The bare bones of that policy, and its attempted realization, have been examined before. On the one hand, the rôle of the Ministry of Education, on the other, the various youth movements, and the "Schools of Cadres". But even now, the lack of official documentation has been an

almost insuperable hindrance. The official archives of the Vichy régime remain, in principle, closed to researchers. Scholars have, of course, been able to use the publicly printed word, and also any German documentation available; and on this basis a number of interesting studies, mainly in article form, have been produced. The "Chantiers de la Jeunesse" have, for example, received some useful attention; and, in the field of educational policy, an (unpublished) Oxford thesis, produced in 1976 by J. A. D. Long, entitled *The French Right and Education: the Theory and Practice of Vichy Education Policy, 1940-1944*, reached a number of striking conclusions, mainly on the basis of published directives and reports. All the work done on this subject so far has, however, been bound to remain generalized and in some respects unsatisfactory. The inaccessible documents, by the mere fact of their existence, have hung over researchers with the possibility that their conclusions might at the worst be invalid, and at the least be lacking in nuance and qualifications.

W. D. Halls has, almost miraculously, broken this impasse. Having obtained special permission to consult the relevant documents in the Archives Nationales, and in the Archives Départementales du Nord, he has closely examined an enormous mass of new material. This includes letters, reports, minutes, etc., not only from the papers of the Minister of Education, but also of other government departments (and of the German authorities). It includes, as well as a great many documents relating specifically to the "Chantiers de la Jeunesse", the archives of Pétain's own "cabinet", and especially those of the Marshal's personal confidant, Bernard Ménétrier. Mr Halls's examination of this documentation has been meticulous, and has been supplemented by recourse to a wide variety of provincial archives. By the sheer amount of new, detailed information which it provides, his book will be indispensable to historians of the period.

History is untidy; there is a danger in trying to create coherent patterns where they do not exist. By avoiding any such imposition, and to a great extent letting the contents of the documents speak for themselves, Halls is largely successful in conveying the essential incoherence of much of the Vichy period. The regime's continual shifts and changes of policy, for example, "As in 'other times', independence of the occupied domains of national life, in education and youth matters there was not one policy, but several, evolving over time. This is because, as compared with the era of the Third Republic, the spectrum of policies that the Vichy Interlude refracted was almost as broad... The colour gradations were as subtle as the doctrines they represented."

Added to this, political tendencies among the legislators did not always accurately reflect their educational theories. Vichy's educational policies, so apparently coherent in general principles, become lost in a welter of contradictory details. Moreover, much of the personnel, both teachers and civil servants, remained the same as under the Third Republic. No matter how factually-minded attempted policy changes might be, they often escaped implementation, and the herd core of teachers probably continued to teach

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a 'sociological morality', allegedly Durkheimian in character.

There were enduring reforms, however, which had a far less ideological basis. Certain Vichy legislation (particularly that enacted when Carcino was minister) was, paradoxically, a logical extension of the reforms initiated before the war by Zay. As Halls puts it, "Victories, Gauls and the Resistance all realized the need for reform; technical education was upgraded, and the concept of education was enlarged from that of 'instruction' to an acknowledgement that it required the development of the whole man".

In the field of youth movements, incoherence was the order of the day, not only because of the conflicting forces at work on the French side, but also because of the occupying power's clear desire to sabotage any attempt at a unified policy.

The book effectively depicts the conflicting beliefs and loyalties of certain key figures. Captain Dunoyer de Segonzac, for example, the head of the "École des cadres" at Uriage, is shown as a heady mixture of patriotism, independence of mind, loyalty to Pétain, Catholicism, elitist beliefs, traditionalism, and nonconformism. As the war situation developed, and as the Vichy government itself changed in relation to it, Segonzac and Uriage moved "from independence to nonconformism... to disaffection". Yet Segonzac, like so many others in his situation, had been wary of the Resistance networks, and full of mistrust for de Gaulle. Though he eventually pledged nominal allegiance to him, he did not lose this basic mistrust.

Such use of evidence is rare, however. On the whole Halls provides a full and living picture not only of the educational and youth movement side of Vichy, but also of many aspects of life at the time: the effects of food-shortages, for example, or of regional policy. And he sights into more permanent aspects of the French character about the continuing all-importance of the *bourgeois*, even in June 1944. But still delivering new instructions about the examination, and that summer all sorts of special arrangements were made for it to be taken amidst the chaos caused by the Allied advance, and by bombing. As Mr Halls puts it: "Such an obsession with examinations as so critical a juncture reveals something of the strength of French educational bureaucracy and even of national character."

Images of malediction

By S. S. Prawer

RUTH MELLINKOFF:
The Mark of Cain
151pp plus 22 black-and-white plates.
University of California Press. £7.75.
0 520 33969 6

Nothing could be more appropriate than the appearance of a study of Cain in a series called "Quantum Books". A quantum, I take it, is a small unit emitting energy; and the story of Cain and Abel, as narrated in Genesis, fits that description admirably. As brief and laconic as anything in the Old Testament, the tale has a symbolic radiance wholly out of proportion to the time it takes to read or to tell, and it has given rise to question after question with which men and women for whom the Bible is a religious or cultural sacrament have had to wrestle through the ages. Why did God accept Abel's offering but reject Cain's? Why was Cain afraid of being killed by men if only his own parents were left alive in the world? Whom did he marry, who was there to hear him Enoch? Why and how, if he was doomed to be a restless wanderer, did he found a city? Was the "land of Nod" a real locality or was it, as its name suggests to those who know Hebrew, a symbolic Place of Wandering? Why is so much space given to Cain's conversation with God and so little, proportionately, to coherent narrative of events? Does Lamech's riddling poem refer, in some way, to Cain's death? Was the mark of Cain a sign of special protection or a sign of infamy? What, indeed, was the mark of Cain?

The short book under review addresses itself to the varied answers given, by writers and artists, to this last question; but it soon becomes apparent that these involve an engagement with some, at least, of the other problems raised by the fourth chapter of Genesis. The author begins by considering the Vulgate text of Genesis 4: 15 and shows the words "Ponitque Dominus Cain signum" to be capable of at least two different renderings: (a) The Lord placed a sign on Cain. (b) The Lord made Cain (into) a sign. The Hebrew text, which Dr Mellinkoff does not quote, could be translated as (c) "The Lord set a sign for Cain". This suggests an interpretation that gained wide currency in Britain with the help of the Victorian person's standby, Dr William Smith's *Concise Dictionary of the Bible*, where we read:

"The mark set upon Cain" properly means that Jehovah gave a sign to Cain, very much on signs were afterwards given to Noah (Gen. ix. 13), Moses (Ex. iii. 2, 12), Elijah (1 K. xix. 11), and Hezekiah (Is. xxxviii. 7, 8). This interpretation, it would appear, does not commend itself to Dr Mellinkoff any more than it did to the translators of the New English Bible. She quotes Ambrose's "signum super eum ponitur" and "signum ponitur super Cain" and comments that these phrases make it "clearly certain" that Ambrose "understood the mark to have been placed on the person of Cain". Clearly certain? Could not Ambrose's words mean, that the Lord placed a sign above Cain, as he did in the case of Noah? One of the rabbinic interpretations Dr Mellinkoff herself quotes points in this direction: "R. Judah said: he caused the orb of the sun to shine on his account."

Let us follow this quotation from the Midrash Rabbah a little further; it is uniquely well suited to introducing some of the other interpretations which Christian, as well as Jewish exegetes have given to the mark of Cain.

R. Judah said: He caused the orb of the sun to shine on his account. Said R. Nehemiah to him: For that which he would cause the orb of the sun to shine! Rather he caused leprosy to break out on him; ... Rab said: He gave him a dog. Abba Jose said: He made a horn grow out of him. Rab said: He made him an example to murderers. R. Hanin said: He

made him an example to penitents. R. Levi said in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: He suspended judgement until the flood came and swept him away. If Rabbi Judah's opinion suggests interpretation (c), Rabbi Hanina's represents (b) and Rabbi Nehemiah's (a). We can go further, however, and see the same passage as evidence for other classifications suggested by Dr Mellinkoff. She rightly contrasts those who consider Cain's repentance sincere (and who therefore thought of the mark as pre-eminently a boon and a sign of protection) with those who did not (and who therefore saw the mark as a token of rejection and punishment). She also adduces a good deal of evidence to show how some interpreters depicted the mark as an *eruptio*, or *envenenatio*. No one can be left in any doubt, however, after perusing all the evidence here assembled, that most of those who gave this subject any thought saw Cain as in some way physically marked. The central chapters of the book are therefore given over to an analysis and classification under three headings: a mark on Cain's body; a movement of Cain's body; and a blemish associated with Cain's body.

We learn to see Cain's mysterious, unspecified mark as leprosy, as a brand of shame, as body-hair and/or horns, as beardlessness, as wens or warts, as black colour - but also as a letter of the Shem, God's holy name. We see it on forehead, cheek and arm, and hear it classified as an apotropaic device, as a sign of opprobrium, or as both of these together. It is described, in Dr Mellinkoff's instructive pages, as a growning or trenching, or as a continual sinking of the head like that characteristic of Parkinson's disease; and we see it presented as Cain himself, his whole doomed person, whose wandering is a sign of God's irresistible will and moral judgment.

In tracing all these varied interpretations through rabbinic commentaries, patristic literature, mystery plays, a few selected post-medieval writings, and pictorial depictions that range from an illuminated Psalter in the Bodleian Library to a woodcut by Gerhard Marcks in a Los Angeles art gallery, Dr Mellinkoff discovers some surprising developments and even more surprising correspondences. There is the confluence, for instance, of the notion that Cain's mark was a horn (or horns) with the tale of his death at the hand of Lamech, illustrated through some beautiful and unfamiliar medieval works of art. "How amazing," the author exclaims at one point, "to see this ancient midrashic theme suddenly emerge in a thirteenth-century English psalter. Is this an isolated and lonely tip of what might have been a hidden mass of accumulated traditional lore? I would attribute this unique portrayal to the strangely wonderful, conservative ability of folklore to preserve and transmit ideas of former times." Among the developments chronicled, the most important and fateful are the gradual identification, in the writings of the Church Fathers, of Cain with the Jewish people, matched by a popular conflation of Cain and the Wandering Jew; the tradition that Cain was black, that blackness was the mark of Cain, which can be pursued from medieval texts and pictures into the writings of Joseph Smith and his Mormon disciples and successors; and the use of the figure of Cain for social satire, Romantic self-projection, and Nietzschean revaluation.

Dr Mellinkoff is happiest when summarizing early Jewish and Christian doctrines and illustrating them with a wide variety of early plays, paintings and sculptures. She suggests links between the horns of Cain and those of Moses (to which she has devoted an earlier monograph) and connects legends about Cain's "bestial" aspect after the murder with his "accidental" death at the hands of his blind descendant Lamech. An important point is made

here, however, when we are told that after Lamech's son had unwittingly caused his father to slay Cain with an arrow, Lamech kills the youth "in anger or sorrow or frustration". We should surely have been reminded, here, that several Jewish versions of this legend depict both killings as accidental and unpremeditated, and that this double accident turns poor Lamech into the very archetype of the "shlemihl" whose Biblical ancestry Heine sought to trace in his poem *Jehuda ben Halevy*. And an important connection is missed, too, when Dr Mellinkoff discusses and illustrates the literary and iconographic tradition which sees Cain as a *holier* man. There is surely a confluence here, between Cain and Esau, natural enough when one considers that the story of Jacob and Esau belongs as surely to that of Cain and Abel to the tape of tale which folklorists know as "die feindlichen Brüder" or "The Two Hostile Brothers".

As an art-historian specializing in medieval iconography Dr Mellinkoff is clearly less at home in modern literature than in earlier texts and illustrations. She was wrong, I think, not to include Gassner's *The Death of Abel* in her survey - for this once popular work (praised by Byron and Coleridge, who were both fascinated by the figure of Cain) would have yielded a rare and pertinent example of text and picture, done by the same hand, reinforcing and counterpointing one another. Her discussion of Byron's *Cain* suffers, not only from insufficient analysis of its context in the Romantic period, but also from an inexplicable omission. While rightly drawing our attention to the burning mark which the Angel of the Lord sets on Cain's brow towards the end of Act III, the author fails to note what is surely Byron's most original contribution to the iconography of the mark of Cain. The passage in question occurs at the beginning of the same act.

Cain: The earth swims round me -
what is this? - 'tis wet;
[Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.]
And yet there are no dew! 'Tis blood - my blood -
My brother's and my own;
and shed by me!

Before the angel marks Cain's forehead, Cain has done so himself - not with fire, but with blood, the very blood he has spilt.

Dr Mellinkoff's discussion of Hesse's *Demian* is even more unsatisfactory than her discussion of Byron's play. She quotes at length from *Demian's* Nietzschean speeches about the mark of Cain as a sign of distinction, of not belonging to the philistine herd, and comments:

Hesse's ... interpretation is so far removed from the imagery historically associated with the evil Cain that the wrenching produces puerile effects rather than a strategically successful distortion. For even though modern intellectuals view the biblical story as myth, the archetypal story of brother-murder is still too much a real part of our society to be treated so superficially.

About this at least three things must be said. First, one cannot simply dismiss speeches reported by "one literary character" (the narrator, Emil Sinclair) as having been addressed to him by another (his friend Demian) without at least considering the question whether the "puerility" diagnosed may not in some measure and at some stage be appropriate. Second, we again find Dr Mellinkoff so engrossed in local effects that she fails to consider the context into which they must fit. She should certainly look again at the passage in the chapter entitled *Jakobs Kampf* in which Hesse's Sinclair tells us that he Cain on his brow. In that chapter the mark is a sign, not only of distinction, but also of guilt - guilt: having fatally wounded, in a spiritual, intellectual sense, the organizer (again in a spiritual, intellectual sense) Emil Sinclair's brother, Here



A detail of "God cursing and marking Cain" in an English thirteenth-century psalter. From the book reviewed here.

the archetypal story and the imagery habitually associated with the evil Cain, of whose absence Dr Mellinkoff complains, are clearly presupposed in the reader's mind as well as in Sinclair's. And thirdly - as the title of the chapter just quoted may serve to suggest - allusions to the mark of Cain are only part of a complex typological and figurative network in Hesse's novel which may not, surely, be simply dismissed or dismissed without any attempt at examination and assessment.

Dr Mellinkoff's more successful analyses and demonstrations illustrate, once again, how much our world needs a Blake counter-aesthetic. We see once more how persistently, in our culture, blackness has suggested the wicked and the ugly; how easily notions of a dark-skinned Cain reinforced discriminatory anti-negro attitudes which even depictions of a wise black Ethiopian doing the Christ-child could not counteract. And some of the most powerful passages in this short, suggestive, well-illustrated book tell us associated with the Jewish people as a whole - a sorry Jewish people as Mellinkoff traces from Amirose and Augustine to Matthew Gregory Lewis and from there to the horrors of more recent times. In association with the Jews the mark could be depicted as the indelible cross that can be clearly distinguished on the Wandering Jew in Dore's coloured woodcut; it could be the letter "J", branded on to the foreheads of Judaizing heretics in the Middle Ages; it could be seen, or imagined, as a crucifixion; it could be a discriminatory badge which Jews were forced to sew on to their clothes. Dr Mellinkoff rightly reminds us, in this connection, of the Yellow Star, and the mark of Cain.

Volume XVII of the Yale Oriental Series of Babylonian Texts is *Texts From the Time of Nebuchadnezzar* by David B. Weisberg (Oxpp, 154 plates. Yale University Press. £24.50. 0 300 02338 3). The volume presents eighty-four texts from the Yale Babylonian Collection which were collected and copied by the late Professor R. P. Dougherty with additional texts to form a corpus of 369 legal and administrative documents written between 605 and 581 BC. Professor Dougherty's introduction and commentary are given with the texts and are reproduced and descriptive catalogue, Indexes of names and places, and a concordance of museum numbers are also provided.

For Trilling this was the definition, or at least the justification, of liberal humanism. The famous "conscience" of liberal humanism, in so far as it was not just a sentimental cheat, consists in strenuous cultivation of a sense of fact - a sensitivity to facts of all kinds, including the unexpected, the unpleasant and the conflicting. It is not just a matter of nobly "facing" facts, when pointed out. (And here a remark of E. M. Forster, Trilling's other liberal-humanist mentor, is relevant: "How can I face facts? They're like the walls of a room, all round you".) What was involved was not a posture, however high-minded, but rather a skill and an arduous self-discipline. Nor, if the facts conflict, is it a matter, merely, of saluting complexity and preening oneself on being *enlightened* or *divers*. If facts conflict, they cannot be facts, not at least in the light in which they are presenting themselves; and by their conflict the honest mind, the liberal-humanist mind, is propelled, dialectically, towards some new vantage-point. This motion of mind, this fluid but directed movement, is what must characterize Trilling as a critic. No critic has more stunningly, more takes us as far, such a long, logical journey, in a single critical essay - so that we look back at the end wondering how on earth we got there.

If this was the character of Trilling's critical essays, it was also the character of his stories. They are full of motion and precipitancy, which is what makes one feel them to be genuine. They catch the intricacy, but also the sheer restless speed, with which cause and effect take place in the ethical life. The inner life of motives, scruples and self-discoveries is not just in dialogue with the other life of fact and necessity but in ceaseless and moment-by-moment interaction with it. And those of physics, consequences are not proportioned to causes, nor is there any certainty after all what is "inner" and what is "outer". Dream as you may of private freedom, circumstances and your own vanities and unconscious fears are ceaselessly enmeshing you into public postures. In "Of This Time, Of That Place" the hero, a young lecturer, is a difficult case over a student, whom he suspects may be mad. Something tells him that, at whatever risk to himself, he must not "foresee" Temen to authority. He listens, self-approvingly, to his "sure instinct"; and at this very same moment he hears himself speaking the fatal words "Is the Dean busy at the moment? I'd like to see him."

The gravities of grown-upness

By P. N. Furbank

LIONEL TRILLING:
Of This Time, Of That Place
And Other Stories
110pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.95.
0 19 212217 7

Lionel Trilling's fictional output was, so far as I know, a very small one: one published novel and a small handful of stories, from which Diana Trilling has now selected just five. We need not therefore conclude that he was not "really" a novelist. A couple of his stories, "The Other Margaret" and "Of This Time, Of That Place", seem to me remarkably fine and lovely to read. Nor need we entertain the stock notion of the critic in Trilling stifling the creator. For criticism is the whole theme of his stories. They deal in cases of conscience and critical dilemmas, dilemmas involving the rival claims of good enlightened causes; and the life of their protagonists - typically, intellectuals - is a continual process of self-criticism. Their strength is exactly the strength of his literary criticism, and the excellence of the one heightens our sense of the excellence of the other.

A different doubt is whether these stories are too literary; and I suppose the answer is "occasionally so". It gives us the slightest twinge of discontent that the "Other Margaret" depends on an unstated allusion to Hopkins's "Spring and Fall". The story concerns a girl, Margaret, and the very hurtful step in her growing-up when - brought up as she has been with intensely "enlightened" views on colour and class, etc. - she is forced to acknowledge that her parents' black maid ("the other Margaret") is actually a nasty person. Now I don't suppose many readers of *Parallax Review*, where the story first appeared, failed to catch the allusion to this "other Margaret"; and I don't imagine many readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* will fail today. Still, there are other kinds of reader. And, more important, those three Margarets savour faintly of the lecture-hall and the "stimulating" critical essay - an effect injurious to so poignant a story. A small objection. And these stories can also be "literary" in a good and positive sense. Trilling has done something valuable and creative with a Coleridge allusion which he writes, in the index, "Indecently, schizophrenic student" in "Of This Time, Of That Place", that "The sense of the three-woven circle of the boy's loneliness smote him fiercely".

The three best stories in the present volume are all about growing up; and so, if we reflect, is *The Middle of the Journey*. It was indeed, pretty plainly, Trilling's central preoccupation. It is what links his interest in Matthew Arnold to his interest in E. M. Forster, the two authors to whom he devoted whole books. With Arnold, of course, his affinities were many, and much in what he says in praise of Arnold as critic applies unaltered to himself. For him as for Arnold the law of criticism's nature is "to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches". And it can be said just as truly of his own style as of Arnold's that "It was a style which kept writer and reader at a sufficient distance from each other to allow room between them for the object of their consideration". But more important even than these aspects, for Trilling, was Arnold's commitment to "seeing the object as it really is": it was here the Arnold most commended his allegiance. It was not that Arnold always succeeded in his aim; other literary critics, probably, achieved it more effectively. Eliot did, and Eliot was no doubt right to consider Arnold as limited and as too genteel and incomplete. The point, more, was that he so thoroughly grasped it as a principle - a principle extending far beyond literature.

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due a few months later to occupy the world's headlines. The novel, metaphorically speaking at least, is about growing up. The hero, John Laskell, has just been near death, from scarlet fever, and has also had a brief love-affair with the idea of death. Invalid and self-centred, he goes to convalesce with his friends Arthur and Nancy Crooms - committed Stalinist fellow-travellers - and, finding no-one there to meet him at the country railway-station, he falls suddenly into panic terror. It is a "vacation" or Tolstoyan Night at Arzamas which he himself does not understand, but which the reader interprets as his real (as opposed to self-indulgent) encounter with the idea of death. Soon, under the care of the Crooms, his dearest friends, he climbs back to health and normality. One thing, however, puzzles him: these enlightened intellectuals will not let him talk about his illness nor his feelings about death - the subject seems to offend them. The puzzlement grows to a grievance, and eventually it brings him to the knowledge that he must break with the whole admired Crooms scheme of values, including communism. The recognition is described by Trilling in terms of "maturity". Laskell reflects, with pleasure, that now the Crooms no longer represent a moral challenge to him, he also need no longer bear any grievance against them.

... now, where there had for so long been this strength of moral ambition, there was simply a vacancy. He did not feel the vacancy as a loss, only as a space through which the breeze of his mind blew very freely. He thought, "I am getting middle-

Transplanting the art

By Lachlan Mackinnon

WILLIAM FAULKNER:
The Sanctuary
The Original Text
Edited by Noel Polk
311pp. Chatto and Windus. £9.95.
0 7011 3900 5

The corruption and degradation of Temple Drake have an atavistic power which Faulkner at first underestimated. We do not need Horace to be shocked on our behalf - his shock is, as it became in revision, a snub-jest, not a natural medium - but we need to know more about Popeye than is here offered. Faulkner depends on Horace's lyrical intricacies for interest in a way which distracts from trivialities and dissipates Tension. This Faulkner was aware of this division in the work may explain why he repeatedly stresses, in passages later cut, the bleeding occasioned by rape with a corn-cob. When recasting, Faulkner introduces an amoral, roving, cinematic mode of narration which gives us Popeye whole and Horace at a decent remove. The amorality of the narrative voice frees our responses, whereas the "original text's" focus through Horace is ultimately claustrophobic and reductive, of imperfectly communicated private meanings.

Chronological straightening also reduced the symbolic architecture which is so apparent here, as, for example, when the parallel is indicated between Tommy's "Durn them fellers" when Temple is being mobbed by the men at Goodwin's place and Horace's "Damn him" (Gowen) as he thinks of it. This is an interesting collocation of innocents, but it belongs in a different book. Similarly, Popeye's request that the sheriff fix his hair and the Jstler's ironic reply as he hangs him are here separated by the scene of Temple in the Luxembourg Gardens. This synchronisation of events is redundant rather than poet, for Temple and Popeye are people rather than counters, struggling to escape the text's melancholy self-criticism.

Noel Polk is careful to relate *Sanctuary* to its novels *Flags in the Dust* (excerpted as *Sartoris*, 1929), *The*

aged, I am beginning not to care". The accusation carried no conviction. It did not think it true and this in itself was surprising.

This catches exactly Trilling's own pleasurable elation, his exhilaration, at the idea of growing up. The novel, though, full of brilliant things as it is, strikes me as a failure, for reasons that have to do with maturity versus the childish. Where it fatally goes wrong is in the clinactic fifth-act exchange between Laskell and Gifford Maxim, the Whitaker Chambers-like defector from the Party. We are to suppose that Maxim is determined at all costs, for reasons deep in his own guilt-stained political past, to destroy Laskell's new-found maturity and freedom of mind. And we are to suppose, too, that a formidable man as Maxim and so grandiose is the duel fought between him and Laskell ("Laskell wondered if any man had ever made an attempt on another man such as Maxim was making upon him"), he comes near to succeeding. Now, this is intellectual melodrama or operatic; it is self-indulgent and not really worthy of Trilling. After all, as he himself would have liked, to choose to be a liberal intellectual must entail a certain renunciation. It means you are not going to re-unite the Party or the Liberal Party over Home Rule or ever cut such a figure under the heavens as do saints or men of action. Nobody is going to care that much about your opinions. This is a loss, of course; but it is childish, surely, to try to redress it in fantasy. There is a great place for intellectual debate in novels and plays, but not, I think - except for purposes of irony - in realistic ones. The careful

to some clumsy duplications, but more importantly it sets Horace at the centre of the voices of those who have acted in the world the tale reveals to him. What Faulkner discovered as he revamped his book was that Horace, the failed and incestuous romantic, was because of his passivity precisely the wrong centre for the story.

At once explicit and unrevealing, *Requiem* could not lay the ghost of Temple, the bewitching model for Faulkner's deepest sexual anxieties. As he snipped the galleys of *Sanctuary* and allowed his material to deliver itself from the intrusive, morbid Horace, Temple became herself, but the selfhood she gained was simultaneously transparent and alien, visible but inexplicable. It is worth reflecting that Faulkner cared about her at least as long as he cared for Caddy Compson, and that, as with Caddy, he could never make her disclose her innermost being. The publication of this moving and intriguing early text will draw new attention to a subsidiary cycle in Faulkner's work, one which clearly mattered far more to him than he ever conceded, for this beginning reminds us that, in a curious sense, *Sanctuary* was never to be completed. Not even for money.

William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* is one of the seven books to receive detailed discussion in Thomas Daniel Young's *The Past in the Present: A Thematic Study of Modern Southern Fiction* (189pp. Bston Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 0 8071 0768 9). The others are Allen Tate's *The Fathers*, Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*, Flannery O'Connor's *The Complete Stories*, Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* and John Barth's *The End of the Road*. Young explains the origins and demise of the legendary "renaissance" in Southern writing, and defines its literature's unique regional flavour.

With eyes open and closed

By Anne Stevenson

MEDBH McGUCKIAN:

Portrait of Joanna
20pp. Belfast: Ulsterman Publications. 50p.

PHOEBE HESKETH:

The Eighth Day
89pp. Enitharmon Press. £4.95.
(paperback, £3).
0 905289 96 X

HARRY GUEST:

Elegies
20pp. Durham: Pig Press. 80p.
0 903997 57 6

MICHAEL BALDWIN:

Snook
48pp. Newbury: Phoenix-Springwood.
£3.
09 059 47878

NICK SIMMON:

In Magnet Air
30pp. Newbury: Phoenix-Springwood.
£2.50.
09 059 47924

JOHN WAKEMAN:

Hopeless Loves and Happy Endings
20pp. Dereham: Midsummer Press.

KEITH SAGAR:

The Reef
18pp. Ilkley: The Festival Office. 50p.
0 905125 05 3

LOTTE KRAMER:

Ice-Break
31pp. Peterborough: Annikin Press.
£2.25.
0 906898 02 1

"Don't think", said Wittgenstein, "look!" Wise counsel to poets as well as to philosophers. Nevertheless, (and this was largely Wittgenstein's point), looking implies seeing, or more specifically, the act of seeing as - of seeing shapes and colours as recognizable things which have meanings only in terms of what we know. So the way we look at things comes back in the end, to the way we think about them. What we think when we look defines what we see.

Thoughts like these are provoked by an extremely interesting, deceptively modest little pamphlet called *Portrait of Joanna* by Medbh McGuckian. Mrs McGuckian is as fine a "looker" as any poet I know. She is as clever (probably as Craig Raine, as perceptive (possibly) as Elizabeth Bishop. Her eye for the minutiae of plant and seed is that of a patient botanist in a high state of emotion. Her sense of the atmosphere of vision is unique, but it is also curiously unseeing. When Elizabeth Bishop stands before a flower, she sees, "on a ripple in the river", a calm inner panic with a loving consideration of exteriority. Medbh McGuckian gives the impression that poetic itself is exterior. Reading these poems, one senses that thoughts and perceptions make mysterious connections with a hidden terror in the poet's mind - a terror which insists on being visible.

Take, for example, the first poem, called "Tulips". The poet begins by describing her human shyness in the presence of more independent, somehow superior tulips which, unlike herself, have "Defensive mechanisms to frustrate the rain/The shakes into the sherry glass/Of the daffodil." In the second stanza, however, the tulips become "follies" and more human, "like all governesses, easily carried away." They are "ballets of revenge," an olympic way of earning, necessarily sacrificed to plot, their faces lifted many times to the artillery of light.

Its lovelessness a deeper sort Of illness than the bewitchment Of tulips with their bee-dark hearts. This, like all the poems in *Portrait of Joanna*, is worth the time spent pondering it. The wealth of exterior explored by Medbh McGuckian's

poems augurs the flowering of a talent which, fortunately, seems to original - too eccentric, even - to be wrongly directed by over-praise or by critical misunderstanding. She sounds, at times, like a contemporary, Irish Emily Dickinson. Flat, coy, confusing when she fails, her successes are dazzling, and her contrived syntheses of looking and thinking, fascinating.

Nevertheless, it is something of a release to turn from the difficult calculations of Medbh McGuckian to the simpler, crofted lyrics of Phoebe Hesketh. The Enitharmon Press has made an elegant volume of her *Selected Poems*, which appear under the title of an ambitious poem at the end (not, however, Ms Hesketh's most successful) called "The Eighth Day". The best poems here are short, personal, unselfconscious. An excellent example, typical of this poet's economy of thought and diction, is "At Four A.M." - a Bishop-like subject which is treated in a Hesketh-like way.

In the nowhere between dark and dawn

a blackbird chips the silence as once it chipped the shell between darkness and light. And I, adrift from myself, in homeless seas,

struggle towards an island when a bird-note splinters in song lifting my hands with leaves.

The images here are drawn gracefully out of an imagination which works with closed eyes, whereas McGuckian's and Bishop's poems give the more startling effect of opened eyes amazement in the face of what should not be possible. Phoebe Hesketh's method is, of course, more conventional, and for this reason her poems are easier to read. It is surprising that the work of this sensitive, intelligent and articulate poet is not better known in this country. This selection from her *Selected Poems* (also, out-of-print) books has been made with care.

The same kind of neglect has dogged the career of Harry Guest, whose *Elegies* have recently appeared in a tiny pink pamphlet published by Pig Press in Durham. Guest's writing, like Hesketh's, is articulate and mature. The six poetic essays in his new book seem to be related to the intellectual wanderings of John Ashbery. Guest's excursions, though, seem to have a Classical source (Virgil/Lucretius) and to owe something, too, to MacNeice. They take place in an autumnal English landscape unthreatened by anything worse than natural age and death. Long, flowing, truly elegiac lines of verse eddy just frequently enough into statements about the nature of poetry and art to make us feel the mental travelling has been worthwhile.

But poetry is neither a pastime nor a public act. It is an ordering and not an arrangement each reader extracts another. It is absurd to limit responses to reason as to a tone-deaf man's view of a concert. The air of loving weariness and *fin-de-siècle* calm which Guest manages to convey in these meditations reinforces rather than undermines a philosophy of mystical resignation. Somehow everything in the end will be well: "What the narrow-minded/conceive of as reality is only the first step. We have lived elsewhere."

A recently founded press that calls itself Phoenix-Springwood (why?) is responsible for a very funny collection of monologues embodying the entire poetic works (or is it merely a "selected") of Sergeant Snook (Michael Baldwin on a night out).

Lads I turned poet. I been inspired by Tozzer Who loaded his carbine with a whole clip of lipsticks And shot the sunset red. Also published by Phoenix-Springwood is a subtle, unostentatious first collection by Nick Simmon, who has a fine eye for place and a disarmingly frank way

of presenting experience. His themes are the seasons, the country, childhood, spacemen - nothing very new. Still, Simmon's poems have a freshness which makes you forget they are variations on old themes.

John Wakeman's *Hopeless Loves and Happy Endings* is a private production that could be the kernel of a longer book published by an established house. One of his poems called "A Sea Family" comes as close as you can to sentimentality without actually melting in bathos. A stillborn boy, an old Glasgow drunk and a Portuguese girl who has drowned herself for lack of love meet, at last, in the sea:

and the old man hugs the baby to his smushed ribs and the girl holds them safe in her flayed arms and they converse together and stroll with the tides and the turning moon amazed at the bright ships and the great fishes.

There's a great deal of life in Wakeman's simple narratives as well as some wry, welcome humour.

There's life, too, in Keith Sagar's pamphlet, *The Reef*, to which Ted Hughes provides a long and not necessarily to the point introduction. Hughes argues that "in this kind of writing" (he says rather little about Sagar's poems individually) "behind a tensely objective prose, sharply focussed on material activity, one feels another vision, of a different order of things". However accurate a description this is of Hughes' own poetry (or prose) it is doubtful that Sagar's verse can sustain much philosophizing. Hughes is right, though, to say that Sagar's poems are "manifestly plain". There is an air of what Hughes calls "fascinated attention" about them. Sagar works at a disadvantage under the shadow not only of Hughes but of D. H. Lawrence. He is the "plain", autobiographical "City Boy", with which the pamphlet begins, is moving and shows Sagar at his simplest (really romantic) best.

Finally, Annakin Press in Peterborough should be congratulated on a beautifully produced collection of a poet's work called *Ice-Break*. Mrs Kramer was born in Germany and much of her work - in painting and in poetry - is an attempt to reconcile herself with two cultures. She is sensitive and honest as a poet, even if her language is unoriginal.

Elemental songs

By Anne Born

GEORGE JOHNSTON (editor):

Rocky Shores: An Anthology of Faroese Poetry
124pp. Paisley: Wulfon Books. £4.
0 905075 10 2

"Cliff falls, the dark houses, rock sheer/this ominous world" begins one of the poems in this first-ever English language anthology of Faroese poetry. The dominant subject of the nine poems represented is their awesome habitat, the towering basalt cliffs and mountains that, paradoxically make the

eighteen small Faroese islands appear enormous. One poem likens the island of Vitthoy to a ship, with peaks for masts. The islands, braced against the Atlantic roughly midway between the northern coast of Scotland and Iceland, are surrounded and penetrated through channels and fjords by the sea, more often than not savage and sombre.

This elemental setting takes control of much of the poetry. So much greater the contrast, then, of the poems describing love, life, in the homes of the great producers of the fjords, where "the roof is whiskey" (that is, turf-covered), and human

The bedside profession

By Douglas Dunn

DANNIE ABSE:

Way Out in the Centre
56pp. Hutchinson. £5.95.
0 09 144850 6

Much of *Way Out in the Centre* is intent on disclosing the predicament of being both a doctor and a poet. At times it is movingly personal as in "X-ray" and "A Winter Visit", both of which concern a physician's attitude to his ill and aged mother. Abse writes of wanting to cry but being prevented by a professional familiarity with illness and grief: "for I inhabit a white coat not a black/ even here - and am not qualified to weep." One vocation complicates the other.

Affecting in itself as his dilemma is, Abse is concerned to take it further in a way which seems to assert poetry over medicine. The last lines of "A Winter Visit" appear to offer his compensatory and intuitively poetic embodiment of escape from what is too much before him as experience:

So I speak of small approximate things, of how I saw, in the park, four flaming standing, one-legged on ice, heads beneath wings.

The trouble is that anything can become a telling "objective correlative" when the poet's mood is powerful enough to invest observation with the necessary feeling. Abse's approach to his predicament seems therefore to be less surprisingly individual than one might expect.

In "Lunch and Afterwards" Abse approaches the gist of his problem. It seems to arise from a contest between his physician's reliance on practical, scientific procedures and his poet's respect for the apparently unreal and irrational, the imagined and mysteriously human factors of life. It is very much to his credit that Abse never refines this issue into an idle antithesis between such slick, shorthand clichés as Materialism and Nature. But even so, one would have thought him peculiarly well-placed to lend the subject the benefit of a more ambitious testimony than "Lunch and Afterwards" presents. A layman is likely to feel that "the medical verse of facts" which Abse's pathological details are of undeniable value to medicine (especially in the light of a recent report from the Royal College of Pathologists,

which, on the evidence of surveys conducted in Edinburgh and Birmingham, suggests that 40 per cent of hospital deaths reveal, on examination *post mortem*, a wrong diagnosis). How much value ought to be placed on the symbolic or superstitious thoughts towards which Abse is drawn in the poem is difficult to decide. A good case could be made for claiming them to be as morbid as pathological details.

Partly of fault is his tendency to over-relax; while his easy manner contributes to a distinctly readable verse, it detracts from a complete seriousness. There are exceptions, of course, the poems about his mother being good examples, or "In the Gallery", and especially his excellent poem "Bedtime Story" in which the directness of his writing is wonderfully convincing. But he is sometimes guilty of introducing the linguistically low-keyed on inappropriate occasions.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with Abse's generously humane feelings, his beguiled, saddened and occasionally effluent compassion, or his alert sense of humour, but one is still entitled to wonder at the attitudes underlying his work. For example, just how tenable is his position of being "way out in the centre"? The phrase occurs at the end of "A Note to Donald Davis in Tennessee". Davis is affectionately addressed and the differences between the two poets are tastefully suggested although neither Davis or Abse's commitments are actually described: "neither of us, I hope, would leave through those doors the right or on the left matted HYOIENE". Fanaticism is not, clearly, but one ought to be passionate about something. It all seems vague and a bit sentimental:

I too am a reluctant puritan, for sometimes as I travel, I feel myself as if I travelled without a ticket.

Yet here I am in England way out in the centre.

Frankly, I don't believe that such a position exists, whether poetically, intellectually or emotionally. "Of Rabbi Yose", "Snaska" and "Of Itzig and his Dog" are drawn from the Jewishness in Abse's background, and are among the best poems in the book. Few people are Jewish, Welsh, a doctor and a poet: it is this combination that makes Abse's poetry so distinct. And yet, given his resources, Abse's work is in the end less startlingly individual and less conspicuously unique than one has a right to expect.

feelings. But even a loved girl is avowed in terms of the surroundings:

your hair a waterfall of black
your teeth
mint veins
eyes
tarn beds
you (are)
green grass
flicking straw
while falls
flee-weather rain

Born into such an environment, these poets have an instinctive knowledge of the cycles and processes of nature. In the poem "Bedrock" Karsten Høydal writes:

I sense a soul in your stillness,
He moves in you, and longing,
you too are in company with us,
changing and shaping as you go
to wordless dust, which is earth
living dust, which is earth.

The work reflects both the starkness and the idyllic character of Faroese life. In a style that seems directly inherited from Old Norse - West Norse, to be precise, the language of the ninth century settlers. The Faroese that developed from Norse was not used as a written language until this century, although spoken by the islanders down through the ages and used for the rich oral tradition of ballads, all today sung and danced to. These ballads

were first collected and published with a glossary in Danish by the Faroese scholar V. U. Hammarshøj in 1891. (The Faro Islands are partially governed by Denmark, and both languages are taught in the schools.)

George Johnston is a Canadian scholar-poet who translates from all the Scandinavian languages and whose fine translation of *The Faro Islands* was published in Canada in 1975. He states there that he avoided archaic, jargonistic, slang and complex modern words, but made a point of rendering the density of meaning in the original as accurately as in the translation of poetry. This is the method he has followed in *Rocky Shores*. The result is a clear translation of Seamus Heaney's dictum of "feeling into words": the book never jars or reads like a translation. All the poets write in Faroese except William Heinesen, whose mother was Danish and who insisted on Danish being spoken in their Faroese home. Heinesen and another contributor, Christian Matras, are both now eighty-one, and both internationally known writers and scholars, though their lives are rooted in the islands. All the writers have published work previously, most in book form. In addition to the introduction and notes, the anthology has an excellent bibliography covering various aspects of Faroese language and literature.

The meritorious and the needy

By Nigel Cross

JIM MCGUIGAN:

Writers and the Arts Council
134pp. Arts Council of Great Britain. £2.50.
0 7287 0285 5

Although the Arts Council introduced its first bursary scheme only in 1966, there is nothing new in the concept of state patronage of writers. Since 1870 the Royal Literary Fund has been giving grants to writers in financial difficulties, and since 1838 the Treasury has been awarding Royal Bounty grants and Civil List pensions. What is new in official (though not in private) patronage is the idea of sponsoring a production of a particular literary work. Both the RLF and the Treasury gave grants on the basis of past achievement and were unconcerned about future productivity. The nearest one came to anticipating the Arts Council's literature policy was George IV, who paid a hundred guineas a year for distinguished literary achievement to each of the ten associates of the Royal Society of Literature, including Coleridge.

Dickens tried and failed to get a similar scheme off the ground. Now, fifteen years after awarding its first grant, the Arts Council judges its Grants to Writers scheme a failure. If its expectations of patronage had been more modest then the scheme might have been accounted a success: the grants have, after all, gone to writers - which is half the battle.

Jim McGuigan's study *Writers and the Arts Council* is not the least of the Literature Department's achievements. McGuigan was given access to the Arts Council files and correspondence and conducted a number of revealing interviews with cooperative panel members and writers. From a relatively narrow research

base he has succeeded in constructing a convincing and well-documented picture of the social and financial problems of authors. With the style of a Gulliver in Laputa, he patiently dissects the inconsistencies of the literature policy and makes a series of tentative suggestions, most of which the Arts Council would be wise to adopt.

From the very start of the Grants to Writers scheme it was clear that there was a confusion between merit and need. As the aim of the grants was to aid and even to incubate Literature with a capital "L", grants could not be awarded to writers, however professional and needy, who were not considered "literary". However, when an author of irreproachable literary merit applied, as did Stephen Spender, for example, the Literature Panel felt unable to turn him down simply because he owned a few Picasso's. Most young writers, meanwhile, were effectively excluded from awards because the panel was unwilling to risk grants on promise rather than achievement.

McGuigan makes it clear that the majority of successful applicants were middle-aged, well-educated and in no particular need. In a sample year, 1976-7, he found that several writers subsidized by the Arts Council were already earning around £7000-£7500 a year. Roy Fuller, Chairman of the Literature Panel until 1977, gave a fairly typical reaction: "I must say such grants (perhaps £2000 or £3000) stuck in my gut. I mean, even those of us not on the bread-line would not anear at a tax-free windfall to buy a new car or have the house painted." McGuigan concludes that "need" should be taken far more seriously by the Finance Committee as ground for an award.

The Literature Department maintains a (theoretically) rigorous position: "The two main criteria used in considering applications from writers are merit and need, and one without

the other is not sufficient. Clearly it would be as improper for the Arts Council to offer money to a mediocre writer who was suffering hardship as it is proper for the Royal Literary Fund for its part to make purely eleemosynary grants." This apparently reasonable division of responsibilities runs into difficulties in two major areas.

First, the RLF can assist only "established" writers, and although it takes a comparatively lenient view of literary merit it does not, as a rule, give grants to young writers. Most of its applicants are over fifty. Young writers are therefore the least likely to receive support from any source, though the most likely to use Arts Council money to finance writing projects. McGuigan takes the view that the literature panel could do much more to encourage young writers, including the acceptance of unpublished work as evidence of literary merit.

Secondly, writers who are in need are not always, not even usually, those writers who are regarded as in the front rank. The Arts Council's favourite adjective to express a poor view of a writer's work is "mediocre". It is unlikely that the work of more than a dozen or so British novelists each year could be considered first-rate, yet the Arts Council grants to about 150 novelists in fifteen years. Charles Osborne has claimed that one of the Literature Department's tasks is to "identify and assist the next James Joyce", but not, presumably, to the exclusion of lesser writers. It is both impossible and undesirable that literature should consist of Dorothy Richardson but not Rhode Broughton, of Joseph Conrad but not Morley Roberts, of Yeats but not Sturge Moore - to name both first-rate and second-rate writers who received Civil List pensions. McGuigan, however, is sceptical of the whole concept of "literary merit". No one was able to satisfactorily define it for

him: it was "serious writing"; in Melvyn Bragg's view it was fairly represented by the literary output of the Literature Panel. In the final analysis then, "serious writers" appear to be a group of people whose work is well regarded by themselves.

The Literature Department chose to interpret McGuigan's findings that most sponsored work would have been written anyway, without an Arts Council grant, as an important reason for ending grants to writers. But since McGuigan demonstrates that the majority of grants to writers were awarded to the relatively affluent, it is hardly surprising that they made little material difference to the composition of a literary work.

What emerges most clearly from McGuigan's report is the suspicion with which grants to writers are viewed by those whose job it is to sponsor or adjudicate applications. There seem to be two schools of thought, one which might now be called the Fuller school. Believes that if writers can't earn a living through literature, then they should take a job and write in their spare time. Elliot shared this view, and believed that the only real solution to the problem of the struggling full-time writer was "regular work of some kind". Novelists seem more inclined to subscribe to the other school, still best represented by Gissing, who believed passionately in full-time writing and equally passionately in securing a decent financial return. To those detractors who claim that adversity is good for authors and toughness them up, Gissing has a neat retort: "We are always being told that the struggle against adverse circumstances is for the good of our art, and that with prosperity comes relaxation of effort. It is so, undoubtedly, with some men, but chiefly those who have nothing very particular to say."

As McGuigan shows, it is the novelists who most regularly apply

for Arts Council grants. Another Council survey, Peter Mann's report on novel readers, showed that only 6% of readers (who in turn represent only 3% of the population) even pick up a "literary" novel. Mann suggests that some form of subsidy should be offered to libraries to encourage them to buy uncommercial novels. Such interventionist policies are part of Arts Council orthodoxy. McGuigan records that the Keynesian concept of the Arts Council was to stimulate demand for art forms that were in decline, and to preserve arts threatened by decline (hence the restoration of Covent Garden from a wartime dance hall to an opera house). The Literature Department's emphasis on conjuring up an audience for the literary novel is of course welcome. But in today's climate the novelist has to be subsidized by someone other than a bankrupt publisher in order to write the subsidized novel.

There are those who argue that the writer who cannot find a paying public should abandon authorship altogether. This would consign most of English literature to oblivion. There was only a brief period between about 1840 and 1880 when the tastes of the reading public approximately matched the production of the best literature, when the numbers of readers matched the production of books. One of the dangerous misconceptions of a policy designed to create more readers is that such readers are unlikely to exist in sufficient numbers to make a scrap of difference to the plight of poets and "literary" novelists. Even PLR, which is intended to establish a fair economic relationship between readers and writers, can do little for those novelists whose works (in their lifetime) are read only by 3% of the population. Today the state must act as the patron of literature as it does for other "minority" arts. Literature has never suffered as a result of generous patronage: the enemy has always been moaniness.

Binominal theorem

By John Weightman

ROMAIN GARY:

Vie et Mort d'Emile Ajar
42pp. Paris: Gallimard.

When the novelist, Romain Gary, committed suicide some months ago, he left behind this small time-bomb to explode after his death and cause red faces among the members of the French literary establishment. It is an account of how, from the early 1970s onwards, he wrote four successful novels under the pseudonym of Emile Ajar, while continuing to publish other works under the name he had already long made famous, notably with the early war-novel, *L'Éducation européenne*, and the Goncourt prize-winner, *Le Racine du ciel*. His motive, he says, was a desire to renew himself, to escape from the persona in which the critics had imprisoned him. He eventually put it about that the Ajar books were the work of his nephew, Paul Pavlovitch, a real-life but rather enigmatic person, who lent himself to the deception. None of the well-known critics guessed the truth; some denounced Ajar/Pavlovitch as being greatly inferior to his uncle, while others thought him much better. In short, the irresponsibility of current critical opinion in the Parisian journals was cruelly exposed!

This point can be readily accepted. Paris is a cliché place where literary politics are rife, and so the many less genuine critics, according to their temporary level of authority, tend to oscillate between prudent time-serving and touchy self-importance. Gary tells a depressing and typical anecdote about a critic who praised one book of his to the skies, and then panned the following one, not for any intrinsic reason - as he himself admitted - but because Gary had omitted to send him a

thank-you letter in response to the favourable article.

It was an ingenious act of revenge on the novelist's part to escape from such pettiness by inventing the alter ego, Ajar, and writing one notable best-seller under that name, *La Vie devant soi*, which was eventually turned into a film with no less a star than Simone Signoret in the main part. Gary claims, with some exaggeration, that, in so doing, he had brought off the most extensive literary hoax since Macpherson's *Ossian*. Since he felt this, it seems strange that he should not have preferred to stay alive and enjoy the sensation himself from the creative point of view. There is, in any case, a contradiction in his argument; he points out that the critics ought to have guessed the truth, because of the many resemblances in style and incident between the Gary and the Ajar novels; if so, where is the renewal?

On reading some of the books of the two series side by side for the first time, I began by thinking that he perhaps gives free rein to his characteristic emotionalism as Ajar rather than as Gary, but on reflection one is not so; *Clair de femme*, which he published as Gary, is on the same level of feverish anguish as the Ajar novel, *L'Angoisse du Roi Solomon*. All these later works, in fact, seem to be frantic variations on the impossibility of living by someone who is overwhelmed by the mystery of time and organic decay and the absence of a genuine feeling, when it is given an overheated expression, does not result in the best kind of art.

Gary was a true *angoué*, but alas he was also, at the same time and in spite of his talent, an unbridled sentimentalist. His suicide proves the authenticity of his suffering, but it does not alter the fact that his works, both as Gary and as Ajar, lack the hardness which differentiates the really good from the middlebrow.

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The fall of the Chancellor

By J. B. Trapp

J. A. GUY:

The Public Career of Sir Thomas More
230pp. Brighton: Harvester. £20.
0 85527 963 X

The trouble with trying to find the "real" Thomas More is that More is everybody's Daddy. Fifty-five years ago, R. W. Chambers claimed that there had already been too many father-killers. "If," he wrote in *The Saga and the Myth of Sir Thomas More*, "the historians have no use for Sir Thomas More except as a terrible example of tergiversation, let them hand him over to us," the professors of English language and literature. The Yale editors and others – professors of English for the most part, rather than of history – have carried on. Chambers also complained of the difficulties More gave him. Who could believe in one so free of flaw? Not subsequent historians, certainly. Vigorously led by G. R. Elton, they have transformed Chambers's image – based ultimately on the estimates of More's friend Erasmus and his son-in-law William Roper – with the help of a vastly increased knowledge of the politics of Henrician England. Chambers's portrait, and its modifications by modern Catholic scholars, have been deeply scored. Here now is a book by a historian, full of Eltonian virtues, and essential reading both for idolators and for iconoclasts.

About Easter 1533, Sir Thomas More – as he then was – exorted his countrymen to "stand by the old, without the contrary change of any point of our old belief, for anything brought up for new". The words appear towards the end of his *Apology*, penultimate of his ponderous English defences of the Church and of the clergy of England, begun five years before at the behest of Cuthbert Tunstall, his old friend as well as his bishop. His immediate application is to the writings of Luther, William Tyndale and other heretics. They are an epitome of More's religious and political convictions – in so far as it is possible to speak of two elements in a system of thought so closely integrated.

They also apply to the arguments of a little anonymous pamphlet concerning the dissension between the lay and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions, published a few months previously and written by someone whom More refers to as "Sir John Some-say". Among other things, the pamphlet had called on the King in Parliament to legislate against clerical abuses and exactions, against clerical conspicuous consumption and against the methods used by the ecclesiastical courts in their dealings with heresy. More, meddling in politics after public withdrawal from the political scene, had to be cautious. Over a year of freedom remained to him (he entered the Tower on April 17, 1534) and over two of life (he was executed on July 6, 1535), but he can surely not have wanted to expose himself. So he attacked to think his opponent a rather simple-minded ecclesiastic, a parish priest perhaps or a religious recluse, rather than what he was: an elderly and respected lawyer, one Christopher St. German, as J. A. Guy now makes clear, functioned as a sort of one-man think-tank for Thomas Cromwell, who took up some of his ideas directly and satiated away or recycled others. Some of St. German's notions in the remarkable memorandum of 1531 discovered by Dr. Guy among Cromwell's papers resemble those of *Utopia* – forced labour, for criminality and restitution of stolen property, for instance. Others – no help for the unemployed who refuse work offered them – have an almost Thatchettian ring.

It is one of the many merits of Guy's book to have fished St. German out of the practical-political dustbin to which he has so far been consigned and to have established his importance in the power struggle of the late 1520s and early 1530s. Further merits: the St. German in

opened for another book, which one hopes soon to see. *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* gives us a foretaste of this, but its main burden is a mass of new information about More as a state official. Specialized, and fiercely focused on the time between More's appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1525 and his resignation of the Lord Chancellorship in 1532, it is based on a familiarity with the documents of a kind that can perhaps only be acquired in the employ of the Public Record Office. Guy confines himself strictly to More's English career. We get next to no glimpse of More the ambassador or More the humanist. A pity perhaps, since the humanist dimension is not irrelevant to the public career, but inevitable in default of new evidence. Doctrinal matters also run a poor second to political allegiances and procedures. Guy's book is clearly written, if not precisely an easy read. Effort is well rewarded however, with a satisfyingly calm and well-proportioned picture of the gradual isolation of More as a political influence during the years of his Lord Chancellorship.

This is one of Guy's strong points. Another is his survey of More's career from the moment before August 1517 when he became a member of the King's Council to the point at which he replaced Wolsey in October 1529. More's conduct towards Wolsey at the opening of the Reformation Parliament is described much more illuminatingly – if not more sympathetically – than ever before. The knowledge of Wolsey's legal procedures embodied in Guy's previous book on *The Cardinal's Court* also combines with his more recent investigation of other records to make him the ideal assessor of More as England's chief magistrate. A myth or two goes by the board. By the time Guy has done with his figures there is not much left of the belief that More liquidated a vast backing of suits, or of some simple-minded interpretations of the old punning quatrain:

When More some time Chancellor had been
No more sults did remain.
The like will never more be seen
Till More be there again.

Wolsey made the machinery, More kept it running – ever the skilful, conservative work-horse he had been long ago as one of London's under-sheriffs.

Guy appears to love even better adventures in the readings of the events of November 1533 to May 1532, and of More's role in them as manipulator and manipulated (more active in Parliament than has hitherto been recognized). Again he draws on newly discovered manuscript material. The silence in which More finally took refuge has been too comprehensively read back on to his actions, so that it has sometimes seemed as if he all along stood like some patient rock from which the waves of reform, revolution, iniquity and royal displeasure were driven back upon themselves. His situation was always precarious, from the moment when a layman who had already accepted the commission to defend his Church in writing – he took over from Wolsey as the compromise appointment to avoid both the secular and the spiritual contenders: the noble Earl of Suffolk, whom the Duke of Norfolk was determined at all costs to keep out, and Tunstall, the prelate. He may have had Wolsey's half-hearted support to add to Norfolk's. Though he lacked the power-base of Wolsey when Wolsey took office, he was the best that the clergy could hope, at that moment, to do. What he offered was experience of Council and Chancery work and the talents of an "ex-diplomat skilled in international law and mercantile practice".

Once in office, though, his political clout was limited by the shift in the centre of gravity towards the Court. There was also that great text in *Leviticus* about the man who took his brother's wife, which was troubling Henry. To trip on it was political damnation. By 1530, when More seems finally to have told Henry that he could not accept the royal request, the highest all royal policy was linked to the divorce. More could not

openly oppose and remain Lord Chancellor. He could only procrastinate, while Henry, who seems almost to the last to have believed that he could win his old Councillor over, sent him to his time theologians for instruction.

Meanwhile, More did not neglect his duties vis-à-vis heresy, even sometimes exceeding his powers. Whether he found the sort of satisfaction in so doing that some of his critics believe is another matter. Guy's address to this difficult and unpleasant question is exemplary, avoiding both the disingenuousness of Chambers and of some modern Catholic apologists and the overreaction of modern anti-Moreans. By the time More was Chancellor, anticlericalism in England had crystallized round the Church's proceedings against heretics and round ecclesiastical wealth, exactions and abuses. The catalyst in the process was the divorce crisis and, in particular, Clement VII's advocacy of Henry's cause to Rome. More's assessment is accurately reflected in his famous three wishes, as reported by Roper and repeated by implication in the epiphany he composed for himself: peace among the princes (satisfied until 1538 by the Treaty of Cambrai, 1529), heresy put down, and Christendom without schism. To this end anti-clericalism had to be contained – More was a great believer in containment – though men far more powerful than he were leaders of the anti-clerical party. Their proposals entailed the intervention of the King in Parliament. Cromwell, the rising star, was using statutory reform with skill. More, having lost Norfolk's support, had also lost Tunstall, translated to Durham. He could only struggle for the status quo.

Caesaropapism, a principle received at first with suspicion by Henry, gradually became more acceptable to the King after he had absorbed the import of the collection of authorities against the legitimacy of his marriage. More's backing came almost entirely from the Lords, and chiefly from the lords spiritual, the hard-core conservatives in the Commons having little force. "The wonder is surely," as Guy says, "not that More would ultimately fail, but that he ever believed he might succeed." Here Guy is again at his best in his account of day-to-day moves, though one may wonder in what sense More believed that he would succeed, at Westminster at least.

This is the context in which Guy sets "the most comprehensive reform manifesto devised in the entire reign of Henry VIII", a remarkable document drafted by St. German and another. This contained a blue-print to alleviate poverty and unemployment by the establishment of a development fund and by job creation. It also called for a "great standing council" of clergy and laymen to review urgent questions – Scripture in English, the spread of heresy, the validity of canon law and canonical custom, ecclesiastical abuses. St. German was a large extent repeating anti-clerical chestnuts though he was not, as Guy asserts, drawing on John Gerson for them, but on Henry of Hesse. Whether the document represents the first occasion of antagonism between St. German and More is not certain. What is clear is that Cromwell fled it away and later made good use of it for the Supplication of the Commons against the Ordinaries in 1532 and in the Poor Law of 1536.

As Chancellor, More had to deliver to the House the opinions favourable to Henry's plea that his marriage to Katherine was invalid. It was this, Roper tells us, that caused him to canvas resignation on grounds of ill-health. Guy is enviably aware that there was nothing wrong with More's health – ignoring what the patient says in another context – believing that he was on firm ground in believing that Henry might hope, because he thought Henry might win, to round. A letter to More from Katherine of Aragon's uncle, the Emperor Charles V, might have wrecked everything. More refused to take delivery after he had been given the drift of it by the Imperial ambassador. It certainly looks as if he continued to trust in Henry and to underestimate the ex-



A wood engraving by the German artist Erhard Schön (c. 1500-1542) attacking Martin Luther as an instrument of the Devil. The picture, probably the first instance of an actual likeness used in print, is included in *William Weaver's Masters of Caricature*: from Hogarth and Gillray to Scarle and Levine edited by Ann Gould (240pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15. 0 297 7790 4).

tent to which power was shifting away from the Court to Parliament. Henry was now the manipulated and manipulated. Cromwell and Cranmer the manipulators. More, in turn, may not fully have realized the isolation of himself and the "Argonauts" party until after the failure of their delegation to Henry, the Answer of the Ordinaries in 1532 and the subsequent intervention of the King against the clergy as "half our subjects, yea, and scarce our subjects" (a favourite formulation, as it happens, of Thomas Cromwell's). After the Submission of the Clergy had been almost at once enacted by a rump Convocation and enforced by a few on May 15-16, 1532, More was clear that his career as a royal servant was over. At three next afternoon he made his defiance public by surrendering the Great Seal.

Guy's account of the political events of More's Chancellorship is full, deft and riveting, and the impossibility of More's predicament is exactly and sympathetically defined. By May 16 Cromwell had so clearly won that there was no point any longer in hanging on to make the best of the worst. Withdrawal from public office so as to see to the

"mending of my own [faults] in living" could now seem morally valid. The tragedy was that withdrawal could not save him. If he would not publicly conform, private More was as much a danger as public More to a régime that demanded absolute conformity.

We meet private More explicitly only in the two brilliant final pages of this book. The whole, however, has told us much to help form our view of the whole man – humanist, parent and *devotus* as well as public figure. It tells us far more than we have so far known about the intricacies and pressures of event and intrigue, the policies that the lawyer-intellectual had to wrestle with – as he had long ago warned himself in the first book of *Utopia* that he would – and that drove him finally to execution and a place among, as Guy puts it, "the very few who have enlarged the horizon of the human spirit".

This is surely, along with some of the Yale edition's introductions, the most important monograph on his subject to have appeared in the past half-century.

At first hand

By Antonia Gransden

DAVID C. DOUGLAS and GEORGE W. GREENAWAY (Editors)

English Historical Documents
Volume II, 1042-1189
Second Edition.

1083pp. Eyre Methuen/Oxford
University Press. £60.
0 413 32500 8

The series *English Historical Documents* initiated thirty years ago under the general editorship of D. C. Douglas was designed to cover in several massive volumes the whole of English history. It is now nearly complete. It has made available in English translation to students, for each well-defined period, essential documents and selections from the principal narrative sources. Each volume is thematically arranged, and contains a scholarly introduction and a bibliographical survey, besides having introductions and bibliographies for each section. Thus for the first time students who know little or no Latin (or Old English or Norman French) can easily consult

original sources, and no longer have to rely on the conclusions presented in "secondary" authorities; they can understand how scholars reached those conclusions, and even test their validity.

Inevitably such collections of texts become out-of-date. New research alters historians' opinions, and new publications make bibliographical revision necessary. It is, therefore, gratifying to have a second edition of Professor Douglas's and George W. Greenaway's volume for the period 1042-1189 which was first published in 1953. The contents are substantially the same as in the original edition; time has tended to confirm the wisdom of the selections, and their choice of documents. However, they have updated the bibliographical apparatus and taken advantage of new editions sources. They have also improved their translations in places, partly with the help of translations provided by these new editions, and partly by their own labours. Finally, the general appearance of the volume is enhanced by the use of larger type.

Serious amusements

By Colin Macleod

JEFFREY HENDERSON (Editor)

Aristophanes
Essays in Interpretation
237pp. Cambridge University Press.
£15.
0 521 23420 5

"Let us say many funny things and many serious things." Thus the chorus of initiates in the *Frogs*. The simplicity of their words is disarming; but it also sums up the main problem of Aristophanes' interpreters: what sort of blend of funny and serious is his comedy, or where is it one and where the other? Those who try to answer this question meet many difficulties too. Aristophanic comedy has triumphantly survived to attain a special popularity in the late twentieth century; but it is tied to its original time and circumstances, the festival of Dionysus and the city of Athens; in a way that Attic tragedy is not. This means not only that the meaning or the full flavour of many allusions eludes us, but also that the author's relation to his public is a particularly acute problem for a modern student. Further, whereas we have a number of complete plays by three different Greek tragedians, there are no more than miserable fragments or notices of the other exponents of Old Comedy to set beside Aristophanes; we cannot see him in or against his genre. The result is that Jeffrey Henderson can claim with some justification in intro-

ducing this book that scholars have tended more and more to think of him as just a brilliant humorist; and yet, to quote the man himself again, "comedy too knows about mortality".

This book collects five essays whose purpose is to take Aristophanes seriously. Lowell Edmunds and Jeffrey Henderson offer thorough interpretations of the *Acharnians* and the *Lyssistrata*; Henderson's paper looks in fact like the forerunner of a commentary on the latter play. Maritta Nussbaum re-examines the treatment of Socrates in the *Clouds*, and Hans-Joachim Newiger the theme of peace. Michael Silk tries to define afresh the nature and qualities of Aristophanes' lyrics. Space forbids a discussion of all these papers, so I comment briefly on only three.

Edmunds argues subtly and ingeniously that the *Acharnians* does not fall into two discrete halves as many readers have thought. In the second part of the play, when Dicaeopolis is gleefully culling the fruits of his peace, he still embodies the meaning of his name ("Just City"). The justice concerned is bound up with city festivals and country matters: war is repugnant to the fun he is having in a rowdy gale-crasher, as the poet puts it in one of his most captivating lyrics. Thus the audience is persuaded to prefer peace not only because Dicaeopolis has shown that the war is not a just one, but because it flouts Bacchus and Aphrodite. This is well said; but the same chorus which congratulates Dicaeopolis comments on his selfishness. As

Nussbaum points out in her piece, a critical note can be sounded amid the comic revelry; and it was not for nothing that Horace the satirist, both a sharp and a benign commentator of human frailty, saw Old Comedy as his model. This we do not have to call Dicaeopolis' harsh treatment of the Megarian or the Farmer just, even if we can watch him with indulgent pleasure. So too in the *Wasps* we can rejoice in the exuberance of Philocleon's activity after he has been converted from jury-service without having to think of it as right and proper.

Nussbaum argues against Sir Kenneth Dover (in his admirable commentary) that Socrates in the *Clouds* is not merely treated as any old intellectual, and that the play can be considered seriously as an attack on his teachings. Aristophanes grasped that the tendency of Socrates' thought is to undermine the morality of custom but offer no solid substitute. The matter is a tricky one: where does caricature end and travesty begin? But her point is well made. And indeed, in the *Wasps* the poet seems to say that the *Clouds* was about the effects of Socrates rather than about Socrates for his own sake, while in the *Birds* and *Frogs* he shows himself well aware of Socrates' power to fascinate the young with that mixture of high seriousness and verbal niceties we know from Plato. It remains true that Aristophanes has deftly struck features of quite different thinkers on to Socrates in order to poke fun at him.

In some important ways Nussbaum

overstates her case. The contest between the Right and Wrong Argument will not pass as even a mocking representation of Socrates' dialectic: it is a version of the par of opposites, one answering the other, which is a typical form of Old Comedy; and it Wrong could be said to relate Right, he does so by means utterly unlike Socrates'. More seriously, Nussbaum does not discuss – nor does Aristophanes – Socratic ignorance and its ethical meaning. To see one does not know is to adopt a spirit of thoughtful humility; and I suppose we should hope of any education that it will impart such non-knowledge, amongst other things. Not need this be a subversive process; witness Nicias and Laches in Plato's dialogue. If the *Clouds* seems such a bitter play, as Nussbaum well brings out, perhaps it is because it leaves us with the feeling that all educators and all their pupils are dishonest or incompetent or both; but it has not really shown that Socrates' instruction is bound to be damaging.

Michael Silk subjects Aristophanes' lyric poetry to a bracing and refreshing reconsideration. He rightly insists that to put Aristophanes beside Pindar and Keats is to misunderstand him; at his best, however, he is a funny lyric poet of genius, whose achievement is hard to define precisely because it is unique. Against the best of Aristophanes Silk then ranges what he judges to be lower forms of his lyric art. His essay rests on delicate analyses of Greek phrasing which cannot be discussed here; but in fairness to Aristophanes one general point should be made.

Silk well observes that some of the comedian's most admired lyrics, e.g. the Iopoeia's call to his wife in the *Birds*, are written in quite undistinguished diction, which is far removed from the brilliance and density of Pindar. But we need to hear in mind more than the mere words. Pindar is always writing about the same situation, an athletic victory; the poet directs his whole art and energy to celebrating the victory and reflecting upon it in a way which will make the familiar event freshly significant and glorious. But Aristophanes builds up comic inventions in the theatre and through a variety of linguistic registers, including quite vulgar or everyday ones. The intense concentration of Pindar's language would simply defeat itself in comedy; and if a bird calls its mate in a sort of pastiche of Euripides, that is in itself a fine comic coup. It is, in fact, perhaps a little misleading to consider the comedian's lyrics without also saying something of his dialogue and "recitative", and something of his imagination as a whole. Nonetheless, Silk's paper sharpens and improves our perception of his subject, and it is good to see a classical scholar offering a critical, not merely a mechanical or statistical, account of an author's style.

There is much, then, in this book to disagree with. That is no blame; indeed, it will achieve its purpose of helping us think seriously about Aristophanes all the better because it provokes dissent. It should also make us the reader to find him, as he himself hopes in the *Synposium*, funny but not ridiculous.

Erotic experiences

By Peter Howell

R. O. A. M. LYNE:

The Latin Love Poets from Catullus to Marce

330pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £12.50 (paperback,
£5.25).
0 19 814453 9

Latin love-poetry was a short-lived phenomenon. The generally accepted view is that Catullus, primarily as a result of his obsession with a woman whom he called Lesbia, imported a personal element into his erotic poetry which had been absent from that of his Greek and Latin predecessors. The example of Catullus was followed, in different ways, by Propertius, Tibullus, Horace, and Ovid; but after the latter had himself imitated the genre again. This gives it a life of about sixty years.

In his lively and useful introduction to the genre (the book's title is a trifle misleading, even if chronologically exact: the last chapter is in fact on Ovid's *Amores*), R. O. A. M. Lyne takes the content as seriously as the form. This is unusual, for classical scholars have been, on the whole, notoriously unwilling to consider romantic love a serious subject. However, Dr Lyne, following the lead set by his Balliol colleague Jasper Griffin in an important article on "Augustan poetry and the life of luxury" (*Journal of Roman Studies*, 1976), is anxious to emphasize that to see these poets as merely adopting a persona, or following literary tradition, rather than actually writing about real life, involves a falsification of their purpose. "Love poetry is usually (among other things) the expression of an individual who is or has been in love – how often Classical scholars obscure that fact! Even Corinna: (without much plausibility) taken to be real – all the less convincingly in that Lyne rightly stresses the element of comic parody of Ovid's elegiac predecessors in the *Amores*. Many an old schoolmaster would be horrified to read of Horace's "cheerful sexual catholicity, the reality of which we have no reason to doubt". Lyne's interpretation of *Odes* 1.5 differs strikingly from that of the best commentators, Nisbet and Hub-

bard. For them, Pyrrha's groto, with its bed of roses, is "a stage property of the Greek novel"; for Lyne, "the setting . . . is meant to be essentially realistic". Horace is, of course, the unexpected figure in the book, and even Lyne sees him as basically "a love poet of the anti-romantic, more particularly anti-Elegiac reaction".

Lyne announces that "the book combines literary criticism with literary history". This is welcome, although no longer (thank heaven) a revolutionarily approach for a classicist. Some of his judgments are disconcerting. Catullus 76, described by Gordon Williams as "a subtle and powerful composition, without model or imitation in ancient classical poetry", is, according to Lyne, "a poetic failure". Clearly Williams and Lyne have different criteria for poetic success, which may be no bad thing. One is surprised also to find Catullus 8 – "one of the poems that Macaulay said he could not read without tears", as Fordyce approvingly notes in his standard commentary – described as "very much tinged with humour", although the only evidence offered in support of this is a couple of doubtful instances of irony. In his analysis of this poem, as occasionally elsewhere, Lyne gets a little carried away: he suggests that the words *nec puella nolebat* indicate "less than total enthusiasm", which seems an unfair interpretation of a Latin double negative (one that in any case contrasts deliberately with *nunc non vult* in line 9), and his view of the poem as a study in schizophrenia leads to the implausible suggestion that "nobis [in line 5] may in fact be a true plural, 'beloved by us'". Strong Catullus associates himself momentarily and as it were unwillingly with weak Catullus in his adoration.

Lyne has, he says, "tried to keep Roman society and the relation of poet and society in view". He starts with a chapter entitled "Traditional Attitudes to Love, the Moral and Social Background", here he discusses attitudes towards marriage with hardly a word about the production of children, which may be less odd than a consideration of Roman marriage than in the case of almost any other society, but is still odd. He argues that the "life of love" proclaimed by his poets, with its rejection of conventional morality, according to which sexual gratification was to be found either in a usually loveless marriage or in casual encounters on

a more or less commercial basis, but not in romantic affairs, and with its emphasis on passion and idleness, was in conflict with Augustus' attempt to re-establish traditional values. These lovers even go so far as to label themselves mad (Lyne claims that Catullus "does not more or less willingly accept and emblazon 'disease' or 'madness' like Propertius or Tibullus", but in Poem 7 he calls himself "insane").

The least satisfactory part of the book is the long chapter on Propertius. The only way to cope with that enigmatic author is to emphasize the element of wit, but, although Lyne claims to have "repeatedly

pointed to Propertian wit", he is far less sympathetic in his analysis of this aspect than Margaret Hubbard in her book of 1974. In fact, his account somehow leaves one more exasperated with Propertius than ever.

"The book is aimed in the first place at sixth-form and undergraduate students of Latin literature", begins the preface. "More advanced scholars may not find it entirely negligible. I also want students in comparative literature and literature in translation courses and other non-specialists (the 'general reader') to be able to use and enjoy it". So Lyne quotes extensively, and translates all his quotations. His own style

is sometimes racy ("Ovid was racy", "Tibullus is . . . getting smug"), sometimes informal ("I think" three times on pp. 62-3; "I must say it doesn't surprise me"), sometimes journalistic (on p. 118 Tibullus is "our living equestrian", then – one paragraph later – "our credulous, facile and masochistic love poet"). But usually serviceable enough. It would be helpful if he could decide which modern instrument he thinks represents the Greek *maior* or Roman *libra*: its performers here include a "clorilest" (sic), "flute-girls", and "oboc-players". The book is rather clumsily produced, with a fair number of mistakes.

Crucial considerations

By David Bain

JAMES DIGGLE:

Studies on the Text of Euripides
127pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £12.50.
0 19 814019 3

For most of this century the "standard" text of the plays of Euripides has been the three-volume edition by Gilbert Murray in the Oxford Classical Texts series. Although Murray's virtues as an editor out-weighed his defects, among which was a tendency to pay too much heed to the occasionally brilliant but wayward Verrall and the habit of explaining a corrupt text by the assumption that it would have been made clear to an audience by means of stage-business, his edition ripe for replacement by reason of the progress in Euripidean studies that has been made during this century. To mention only two of the areas in which scholars have made advances since his day: much more is now known about the relationships of Euripides' manuscripts (particularly because of the work of Turyn and Zuntz), and as regards his lyrics far more system and objectivity obtain (although it must be said that in this most difficult field of study much remains controversial or obscure).

The daunting task of replacement has been undertaken for the Oxford

University Press by James Diggle, who in the preface under review gives us a companion to the second volume of his text. This text-volume, which will be the first of the series to appear, has been delayed through unforeseen circumstances.

Dr Diggle presents a series of notes of varying length on problem passages in the six plays to be included in the second text-volume. There are also a number of cross-references (sometimes with additions and corrections) to treatments of other passages in the plays which have already appeared in article form. These notes abound in acute diagnosis and decisively settle many problems in the text and interpretation of these (and other) plays and incidentally, in many other passages in Greek literature (there are full and well-ordered indexes). It is only rarely, as at *Suppl.* 508-9, that one feels that there exists more of a problem than Diggle has made out. A great deal of new material regarding metre, diction and usage is presented. Scholars interested in these topics will have constant recourse to this book.

There is no discussion of the manuscripts or of the history of the text. For this we must await the preface to Diggle's text and for those who, like the present reviewer, believe these things are better discussed in the vernacular this is a disappointment. As it happens, however, manuscript questions do not figure to any great extent in determin-

ing the text of the plays in the second volume since five of the six are "alphabetic plays" for whose transmission we rely on only one independent witness, the fourteenth-century manuscript P. The manuscript P which Murray, siding with Willamowitz against Weeklie, regarded as a twin of L, has been shown to be for these plays a copy of L made before the Byzantine scholar Demetrios Triclinius had completed his corrections to its text. In such circumstances, a text where variants are scarce to the point of non-existence, it is conjectures that must interest the editor and Diggle time and again revives good conjectures that had been consigned to Murray's apparatus or, worse still, to oblivion. The contrast between his editorial approach and that of recent editors of individual plays, in the Teubner series is stark – these last in addition persist in treating P as an independent witness; his text will look very different from theirs and will be, I am sure, much nearer to reflecting what Euripides wrote.

It remains to congratulate all concerned for the high quality of production and attractive appearance of a book which must have made great demands of the printer. I spotted only three misprints, Günther Jachmann being given the wrong initial on p. 23, the omission of the book number in the reference to Horace on p. 103, and a wrong cross-reference at *Ion* 981 (p. 111).

commentary

The bardic bearer

By James Campbell

Somhairle MacGill-Eain - Sorley MacLean
National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

With characteristic lack of self-effacement, Hugh MacDiarmid wrote to Sorley MacLean in 1977: "There is, I think, no doubt about you and I being the two best poets in Scotland today." Following MacDiarmid's death, MacLean is regarded today as Scotland's greatest living poet: an importance attested to by the demands made on him to read his work in Europe, America and Canada, as well as in Britain. Extraordinary, when you consider that very few of the people who make such demands (even in Scotland) are able to understand more than a word of his poetry. At readings - and he is the greatest reader of his own work I have ever heard - he recites a line-by-line translation, usually intended only to be a crib, an aid to "hearing" the poem, before delivering his sonorous, melodious Gaelic.

The part of the current exhibition at the National Library of Scotland which documents his early life is full of mention of MacLennan and Matheson and Nicholson who were bards, singers, pipers and tradition-bearers; of Malcolm, the poet's father, MacLean says: "In some songs his timing and weight were such that I now find it difficult to listen to these songs from anyone else." Similarly with his grandmother - a tradition-bearer of great quality born in the middle of

the last century - whose versions of Gaelic songs MacLean describes as being "the first great artistic impact on me." When MacLean talks of "the unbearable decline of Gaelic" during the 1930s, he is regretting not only the loss of a language but of a history.

His older relatives were people who had personal experience of the emptying of the Highlands and Islands by Anglicized Highland chiefs with nothing in mind but their own pockets. The Clearances removed most of the Gaelic-speaking people to the Lowlands and to the various "New Worlds", therefore making it incumbent on those who remained to bear the Gaelic tradition of music and song. The survival of the tradition today owes much to MacLean himself, whom Professor William Gillies, in his Introduction to the exhibition catalogue, praises for "Seeking out and nursing the living strengths of the language - the eloquent passion of popular song, the richness of earlier poetry".

In addition to the many fascinating photographs in the exhibition, there are early reviews, magazines, letters (mainly to and from his close friends MacDiarmid and James Caird), and first editions of his books: from the first - *17 Poems for 6d.*, published with and by the late Robert Garioch - to his selected poems, *Reithoir is Controigh*, which appeared in 1977.

Sorley MacLean is a modern poet in a great tradition, and the old songs to which his work owes so much have in turn found new poetry in him. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the exhibition is a worthy tribute.



A detail from Alexander Moffat's "Sorley MacLean" (1979), to be seen in the "Seven Poets Exhibition" at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

A question of honour

By Gerry Ashton

The Mayor of Zalamea
Cottesloe Theatre

The Mayor of Zalamea has always been considered one of the best of the Golden Age comedias. It has a clear, racy plot, varies the comic with the serious, and yields a number of important themes, among them justice, honour and vengeance. Pedro Crespo, a wealthy peasant, takes a captain from Philip II's army into his house as part of his duty to offer shelter to the king's men. The captain rapes Isabel, Pedro's daughter, and she is left with a child. Pedro Crespo is a man of honour, and he is determined to see justice done. He is a man of honour, and he is determined to see justice done. He is a man of honour, and he is determined to see justice done.

The justification for the murder of the IRA wife, Muschamp's play examines the moral problems that regular soldiers are not normally equipped to deal with, but the issues certainly have more resonance than Muschamp allows. Conceivably, if two of the five roles had not been given to television names (Hannah Gordon as the general's daughter, Peter Gilchrist as the captain), the play might have seemed less superficial. Lewis Mander, as Guy Holden, occasionally hints at greater complexities. But, with Philip Blood as the major and Ernest Clark as the general behaving as if they were in a standard whodunnit, the shabby pretensions and thin sentiments of Muschamp's writing are fully exposed.

The exhibition "William Alexander: An English Artist in Imperial China" opens at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery on September 8.

in the *Henry IV* plays: none of this is surprising to us. It is clear that the Spanish plays of the Golden Age, in many respects resembling their English counterparts, and originally staged in much the same way, could be excellently presented here. Michael Bogdanov's production of *The Mayor of Zalamea* shows us what can be done. He has a splendid sense of the physical movement implied by the text, and his bare stage and minimalist props concentrate the attention on the action - the essence of the Spanish *comedia*.

Adrian Mitchell has written what he calls a "version" of Calderon's text for this production. He has, in fact, kept fairly close to the original. His use of occasional rhyming couplets, for example, serves no real purpose. This is a minor complaint compared with the misplacement of linguistic register which sometimes gives us. There are anachronisms - the "caducous y cascade" (lured and decrepit) Crespo becomes "mesolitic"; odd idioms - "prehensile" (pregnant) becomes "in the attic"; and above all breaks with decorum - Calderon's Captain would not and need not say "I'm not a shill". There is on both the director's and the translator's part a certain amount of playing for laughs which intrudes into the serious business of the play. Don Mendoza's servant Nuno sometimes and is knocked down too often. Don Alvaro is not initially a credible enough rapist. Daniel Massey plays the part superbly on the whole, but seems almost a suave, David Niveo-like figure when we first see him, as if not to be taken seriously. Rebollo and his mistress Chispa (who sounds pretty gaelic) although she says she isn't, instead of merely disappearing at the end of the play, intrude some of their earlier rivalry into what is a serious moment. One further distracting innovation is the shadowy enactment of Isabel's violation, as she recounts the event to her father.

While some of the elements in *The Mayor of Zalamea* connected with the honour code might puzzle the English audience, there is a great deal which is familiar. The alternating comic and serious scenes, the stock character of the *gracioso* (here a kind of Malvolio with an imperious, servile) the over-the-top, ironic tone and the low life characters

The star of Calderon's play is undoubtedly Pedro Crespo. It would be hard to imagine the part better acted than it is by Michael Bryant. He plays the noble Castilian peasant, confident of his own personal worth, with just the right dry, ironic tone and stubborn stance.

The reproductive system

By Edwin Morgan

Seelig Is Nat Belclevy
National Gallery of Scotland,
Edinburgh

This fascinating and instructive exhibition is devoted to reminding us that all is not what it seems in nrt-gallery and auction-room, and if it is entertaining in lifting the lid a little on a world of forgery, gullibility and greed, it also suggests some searching and perhaps unanswerable questions about the nature of an individual work of art and the fallibility of our reactions to it.

The exhibits are arranged to bring out the characteristics of two main troublesome categories: (1) copies and fakes, and (2) mutilations, restorations, and forgeries. Copying, of course, need in itself have nothing fraudulent about it, and even the greatest artists have not scorned to make copies of works by admired predecessors when they were starting out as students or apprentices. Or a painter may make a copy of one of his own paintings, as in the fine example here of Raeburn's two portraits of Mrs Kennedy: each very slightly different, but clearly the same sitter and the same pose, and each equally good. The fact that painters do make such copies of their own works invites fraudulent copying by others, and although many of the examples here are obviously inferior, whether in quality of brush-strokes or to sharpness of colour, it must be remembered that normally such a direct comparison with the original would not be easy or possible, a difficulty the forger relies on.

Even so, the copy here of Botticelli's "Portrait of a Youth" is uncannily well painted and convincing, and it is only the careless painting of the background which acts as a giveaway. But two problems multiply when the forgery is not of an actual painting but of an artist's general style. It is easy to be wise after the event; the van Meegeren Venetians actually seemed to be more crude, after one knew they were fakes; nevertheless, experts were deceived. (Now that there are van Meegeren collectors, presumably there are van Meegeren forgers around too.) The exhibition shows two pictures of laughing children which were widely accepted as being by Franz Hals until the 1930s, though they were probably painted about 1880. Also included is a Boudin, "Shipping in Antwerp Harbour", where the catalogue will not commit itself to saying whether this is a copper-bottomed fake or merely an off-day production by the man himself. If it is a fake, it is a contemporary fake, so scientific tests will not help, and we have to fall back on the eye. Yet the eye, poor organ, steeped in connoisseurship as it may be, cannot quite swear one way or the other.

And what does the eye do, confronted with a large and apparently well-composed picture like "Popolo's Finding of Moses", from which to fact a sizable section, containing a solitary and very striking figure, has been hacked off at the right hand side? Or, to take an opposite case, how can one eye accept, without any great discomfort or sense of strangeness or absurdity, Quentin Massys's "Portrait of a Man" which has had new objects expertly painted into it at different times, three or even four centuries later; in a mad but exquisite grasping the reasons for which are impossible to guess? The eye, too, must surely be shaken by the sheer extent of cerebral and successful deception the exhibition delves into revealing - a festering corpse simply painted out as too ugly, a short-tunicked and rather camp Jesus given a convincing long skirt, a man brandishing an anachronistic jawline overplanted to make him mildly raise a wince. In all these

cases we now know what the original was like; but in how many others are we still in happy ignorance?

It would be comforting if we could think that literary connoisseurs are in not quite such a state of disarray. Certainly attributions and datings can tease, even after computer analysis, and writers from Shakespeare downwards are no strangers to plagiarism; yet there is surely an important sense in which a painting or sculpture differs from a poem or novel: the former can be copied, the latter not. The only near equivalent would be one of Apollinaire's hand-drawn *Calligrammes*, or a three-dimensional concrete poem by Ian Hamilton Finlay, or possibly (though less persuasively) an illuminated page by Blake, and these are examples only because they partly usurp the territory of art. In the sense in which a work of art - the "Mona Lisa", the "Burghers of Calais" - exists, a poem and a novel

do not exist, and what does not exist cannot be copied, either lovingly or criminally.

In that witty story by Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote", the twentieth-century Menard never contemplated a mechanical transcription of the original; he did not propose to copy it, but in attempting to recreate it he found he was writing it down word for word - still without producing a "copy", since what it meant to servants could never be the same as what it meant to him, or Borges, or us. The absurdity of writing out an exact copy of *Don Quixote* has no answering absurdity in the world of art. No matter how carefully a painting is copied, whether by human or by mechanical means, the physical existence of the original guards a status which has no literary equivalent, and this is reflected in the fact that we accept *Don Quixote*'s multiple availability in Penguin Classics with-

out the misgivings we feel about Athena reproductions of van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. This is not, or not necessarily, snobbery, but rather a recognition of the uniqueness of the work of plastic art. What *Hamlet* is, or *Paradise Lost*, no one knows; they reach their approximate, contingent definitions only when performed or read, and quickly vanish again. But the non-existence of a literary work of art is not a disadvantage. Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are *Dead* and *Dog's Hamlet* cannot destroy *Hamlet* in the way that a cut-up painting or a dispersed triptych destroys its original. The glory of painting is its vulnerability, the glory of literature is its invulnerability. Art is always being forged, because it is worth forging; literature is rarely forged, because it is a kind of forgery already, back to Homer and beyond, "the hoax that joke bilked" as Joyce called it. Neither, it seems, is better than the other.

Treasure island

By J. B. Donne

Festival of Sri Lanka
Commonwealth Institute

In Western eyes, Ceylon is an extension of India, an island outpost of the Indian sub-continent. But to the Sinhalese, despite their undoubted Aryan origins and their reversion to the old Indian name for their country, Sri Lanka is an integral part of South-East Asia, and also the centre of world Buddhism. As the upholder of the old Theravada School of Buddhism, it has close religious links with Burma, Thailand and Kam-puchea and through sea-trade and later Dutch colonialism long-standing cultural and historical ties with Indonesia. But since Independence in 1948 and Ceylon's prominence in international affairs as a non-aligned country, tourism has increased enormously, and its Buddhist and secular monuments are becoming as well known world-wide as the pyramids of Egypt, with which it can be compared for sheer physical vastness.

Today, hippies gather outside the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, most of them unaware that the doots are opened each evening so that one may enter and pay one's respects by offering flowers before the Holy Relic. The three huge Buddha figures carved in the granite outcrop of the Gal Vihara appear on tour posters. One represents the Parinirvana, the passing away of the Buddha, lying on his right side on his death couch, a scene as essential in the religions of the world as the Crucifixion, and as often depicted in the greatest works of Oriental art. Less widely known is the holiest site of all, that of the sacred Bo-tree, descended from the very Bodhi-tree under which the Buddha sought enlightenment in Northern India over 2,500 years ago. A cutting was brought to Anuradhapura in the third century BC and has flourished ever since, thus becoming the oldest historical tree known.

But many of these sites and monuments, particularly temples and stupas, now urgently need restoration and conservation. A colossal five-ton plan has already been set up jointly by UNESCO and Sri Lanka to carry out archaeological work on what they have called the Cultural Triangle, formed by the three royal cities and religious centres of Anuradhapura (fourth century BC to eleventh century AD), Polonnaruwa (eleventh-thirteenth centuries AD) and Kandy (fifteenth century to 1815). The scale of these operations is considerably greater than the for the 'salvage of the Temple of Abu Simbel, since at least six different

sites are involved this time. The cost will be great, too - some thirteen million pounds at present estimates.

The main purpose of the Festival of Sri Lanka has been to publicize and promote this scheme, which it has been doing through a number of seminars and an exhibition of art and antiquities (continuing until September 13) that have never been seen here before. The most beautiful of these is undoubtedly the eighth-century bronze gilt image of a Bodhisattva sitting in the attitude of ease with the left leg dangling, the tips of the thumb and fingers of the right hand joined in the teaching *mudra*. The naturalness of the pose, with the left shoulder raised to counter-balance the raised right leg, and the realistic representation of the body, particularly the abdominal musculature, combine with the benignity and repose of the face to express a sense of deep meditation and peace. In contrast is the large bronze image of the Hindu deity Shiva as Nataraja, the animated Lord of the Cosmic Dance, with an aureole of flames around him, dancing on one leg on the personification of evil and ignorance. In one of his four waving hands he holds the drum whose sound causes the cosmic creation. The sheer technical ability displayed - the figure alone is over three feet high - reveals the advanced level of bronze-casting achieved in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the smallest and yet the most sacred items in the exhibition is a gold reliquary in the form of a stupa, just over one and a half inches across, surmounted by a royal umbrella. This was found in the stupa near Anuradhapura which contains the ashes of Mahinda, who brought Buddhism to the island in the third century BC.

But many other aspects of Sri Lankan art, life and society are being displayed at the Commonwealth Institute. There are performances of Sri Lankan plays, films and dances and daily demonstrations of various traditional crafts, including weaving, wood-carving, *batik* and silversmithing. In the theatre foyer one can sample a variety of delicate Sri Lankan dishes, so different from the carries one is accustomed to here, for they are mainly prepared with coconut milk and coconut cream, and served with very hot sambals; a kind of chutney originating in Indonesia and introduced to Sri Lanka by the Dutch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A display of modern Sri Lankan art is unfortunately too small to exemplify the range and depth of the individual artists. One misses the last paintings of the late Ranil Deraniyagala, but George Keyt, the doyen of twentieth-century South-East Asian painting, is well represented by some of his smaller canvases. Finally, the Lake House Bookshop has put on a large

display at the Institute of Sri Lankan publications which are normally unobtainable in this country and are being sold at bargain prices.

However, nearly every book or exhibition concerned with Sri Lanka, art, history or culture suffers as this display does one serious drawback - they omit almost without exception the colonial era, from the arrival of the first Portuguese in 1505 to the achievement of Independence in 1948. During this period, Ceylon (the island has had so many names, Lanka, Taprobane, Serendib, and the Portuguese called it Zeylan) was partially or totally governed by the Portuguese, Dutch and British in turn for about one and a half centuries each. Cultural exchanges were many and mutual. For example, the Portuguese adopted spiral turning from the East and the resulting Indo-Portuguese furniture was copied by the Dutch and introduced into Ceylon (and into Java too). Today, Ceylon furniture of the Dutch Colonial Period is still to be found in use in the homes of the old families and is much valued and admired. Up to recent times there were families that still spoke a Portuguese patois, and the Burghers, descendants of the early Dutch colonists, form a very important and esteemed part of society.

At the same time the traditional arts, practices and beliefs of the people were maintained and indeed survive today. There are still performances of the masked katan dances and the masked healing rites of the south of the island, short, watered-down extracts of which are specially put on in the tourist centres for foreigners. Some of these masks in museum and private collections can be dated back to the middle of the last century. The folk goddess Pattini is still worshipped by thousands every year, and dances are still performed at all-night ceremonies in the fields, beseeching her blessing for the fertility of the crops. It is surely this traditional way of life and culture as much as the magnificence of the archaeological monuments that has attracted Arthur C. Clarke, who is to give two illustrated talks at the Commonwealth Institute (on September 7 and 9 at 7.30 pm), to become the most famous foreign resident of Ceylon/Lanka.

"The Influence of Tuberculosis on the Work of Visual Artists" and "Colour as Sensation in Visual Art and in Science" are two articles from a recent issue of *Leonardo*, the "International Journal of Contemporary Visual Artists", now in its thirteenth year. Subscription details for the magazine, which has a special interest in the relation between art, science and technology, are available from Pergamon Press, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0 BW.

New Oxford Books: History

Old Friends, New Enemies

The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941
Arthur Marder

From its establishment in 1868 the Imperial Japanese Navy had been closely modelled on the Royal Navy. Professor Marder examines the gradual atavism of this association, compares and contrasts the strength and weaknesses of the opposing navies as Britain and Japan prepared for war, and gives a fresh interpretation of the story of Force Z, which was eliminated in the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* on 10 December 1941. Illustrated £19.50 27 August

The Tools of Empire

Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century
Daniel R. Headrick

This book concerns the technological means used by Europeans - particularly the British - in the nineteenth century to penetrate, conquer, develop, and exploit their colonies in Asia and Africa. The author contends that the technological aspect of European imperialism has been largely ignored by historians. £10.50 paperback £24.95

The Philosophy of the American Revolution

Morton White

This book shows how the Founding Fathers understood such philosophical ideas as liberty, self-evident truth, natural law, and inalienable rights. The author notes that the fathers acknowledged their failure to invent any new philosophical ideas, and admitted dependence on the views of earlier philosophers and jurists from Aristotle to Locke. Paperback £3.95 Galaxy Books 27 August

The Legacy of Greece

M.I. Finley

This is not a revision of the old *Legacy of Greece*, published in 1921, but a completely new book with new contributions and a different approach. The chapters inevitably consist to some extent, as in the earlier volume, of surveys of the different areas of Greek culture, but that element has been reduced and more attention is given to what later ages have made of their inheritance from the Greeks. £8.95

The Fasti of Roman Britain

Anthony R. Birley

This book describes and analyses the careers of nearly two hundred Romans who served in Britain either in the administration or in the army. It does not merely list their activities in Britain but to their background and service elsewhere, and thus contributes to our knowledge of the social history of the Roman Empire as well as to the history of Roman Britain. £30

Oxford University Press

Dirk Bogarde

Voices in the Garden
Dirk Bogarde's compassionate new novel is a sophisticated comedy of manners that will confirm his reputation as a thoughtful and original writer.
0 7011 2572 1 352pp
September £6.95

Mohamed Amin

Cradle of Mankind
Foreword by Richard Leakey
Text by Brian Teitley

Mohamed Amin captures the extraordinary atmosphere of Lake Turkana, the site of Man's earliest existence, in 164 full colour photographs and provides a unique record of the customs and cultures of its tribal communities.
0 7011 2587 X 192pp
with 164 colour plates
October £14.95

Hakluyt's Voyages

A Selection by Richard David
An abridged collection of the journals of Richard Hakluyt, the Elizabethan clergyman and diplomat with a passionate interest in overseas trade and exploration who published, around 1600, eyewitness accounts of some of the most perilous sea adventures of the day.
0 7011 2583 0 640pp
with 16pp black & white illustrations and map and papers.
September £12.50

B.H. Warmington

Nero: Reality and Legend
This classic study reassesses the Nero legend, skilfully separating fact from fiction.
0 7011 1438 X h/b £6.95
0 7011 1454 1 p/b £3.95
192pp including 6pp maps, diagrams and photographs
Ancient Culture and Society series
Release August

Marcel Proust

Swann's Way
The first two volumes of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* in C.K. Scott Moncrieff's translation will continue to be available in paperback.
Part 1
0 7011 1049 X
£2.95 81pp
Part 2
0 7011 1060 3
£2.95 285pp
Release July

The Killing Game

Greenwich Theatre
To justify brutality and anatomize heroism could indeed make for a challenging piece of theatre today, when the propaganda in most new plays is all too predictable. But Thomas Muschamp's *The Killing Game* is only a fleeting and inadequate reconnaissance of this territory, lacking in credibility.

Colonel Guy Holden, married to a general's brassy daughter, Clarisse, has received his DSO in Ulster, where he wiped out a provo training camp and murdered the pregnant wife of the IRA man in charge. He was aided and abetted by his discreet SAS mission by Private Brown, his devoted batman and fellow comrade of many campaigns in the twilight of Empire. One evening his father-in-law, General Anderson Green, drops in. The Holdens' married quarters at Camberley, with exciting news, Guy is being promoted to Brigadier and his number two, Major Bradley, a stickler for the rule-book, is to take over the battalion. The trouble is that a journalist who was once in the IRA in Ulster is running a story that Guy is a deserter; never have been awarded his DSO, and that he and his batman should have been prosecuted for murder instead. Clarisse, meanwhile, sees the Ulster regiment as a chance to shake off at least the welcome attachment of Brown to her husband. The plot involves some mystifying double-crossing by the old general, but in the end, the top brass win out. Brown stays in Camberley, and Guy will take his chances going back to Ulster, knowing that he may soon become a prime IRA target.

A few decades ago the ethics of war and the soldier's honour were taken for granted. Major Bradley in Muschamp's play has a

role not unlike that of John Mills in *Tunes of Glory*, a film in which Alec Guinness's unlikely assumption of a red wig and lower class Scottish antecedents was triumphantly justified by the subtle, profound assertion of regimental and national traditions. The army wife, the general, the private, the reluctant hero: the characters Muschamp has chosen to assemble are also types to be found in John Ford's *Rio Grande*. Both these have been re-run on television within the last year, and it is to the classic cinema stock that we are handed the look for a reliable understanding of the themes that Muschamp skirts here.

The justification for the murder of the IRA wife, Muschamp's play examines the moral problems that regular soldiers are not normally equipped to deal with, but the issues certainly have more resonance than Muschamp allows. Conceivably, if two of the five roles had not been given to television names (Hannah Gordon as the general's daughter, Peter Gilchrist as the captain), the play might have seemed less superficial. Lewis Mander, as Guy Holden, occasionally hints at greater complexities. But, with Philip Blood as the major and Ernest Clark as the general behaving as if they were in a standard whodunnit, the shabby pretensions and thin sentiments of Muschamp's writing are fully exposed.

The exhibition "William Alexander: An English Artist in Imperial China" opens at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery on September 8.

going to have its way with him - the intended impact.

The Stratford World Shakespeare Congress

By Stanley Wells

During the first week of August, close on 700 scholars from some thirty nations descended upon Stratford-upon-Avon to confer about "Shakespeare: Man of the Theatre". The International Shakespeare Association held its first official congress in Washington five years ago, though many members clearly felt that the Vancouver congress of 1971, from which the Association sprang, was its first meeting in fact not in name. In Washington the congress was merged with the annual gathering of the Shakespeare Association of America, which this year again joined forces with the International Association, bringing over 300 of its members together outside the American continent for the first time. Under the expectation that Stratford would, as usual, be offering four Shakespeare plays at this time of year, the congress was moved from April to August, but the success of Nicholas Nickleby has disrupted the season, and from this point of view, at least, the meeting might as well have taken place at the usual time.

Beyond convivialities, the opening event was an impressive service of morning prayer, with the litany and ante-communion, based on the Elizabethan prayer book of 1559, and held in the church where Shakespeare himself must have gained his familiarity with the Bible, the prayer book, and the homilies. The volatile preacher, W. Moelwyn Merchant, is one of the few Shakespeare scholars in Holy Orders. A playwright of today gave the inaugural lecture, John Mortimer speaking beguilingly of his boyhood enthusiasm for Shakespeare; his unquestioning assumption that a dramatist naturally starts from an idea and then seeks a story and characters to embody it may well have heartened academics whose fellows have castigated them for supposing that Shakespeare worked like this.

On the warm Sunday evening, delegates packed the Theatre for a recital, *William: the Conqueror*, devised by Roger Pringle, which allowed them to see their President, Sir John Gielgud, in action, elegantly supported by Richard Pasco, Robert Spenser. It was worth coming from Moscow, Melbourne, Minnesota, or Münster to hear Sir John once again perfectly fusing sound and meaning as Hamlet, Richard II, and Lear. To see him as Justice Shallow, chuckling with a survivor's glee over "how many of my old acquaintances are dead," gave an increased sense of Shakespeare's range as well as of the actor's.

After the preliminaries, the scholarly business. Each morning from Monday to Thursday a series of lectures, short papers and discussions, given in tandem, so no one could hear them all. British and American speakers predominated. Bernard Beckerman, incoming President of the American association, incisively propounded a theory of "Historic and Iconic Time in Late Tudor Drama". Anne Barton received general admiration for her discussion of Shakespeare's belated influence on Ben Jonson, a view which must lead to a reevaluation of Jonson's later plays. Benedict Nightingale spirited up many varied theatrical manifestations of the ghost of Hamlet's father. Inga-Suna Ewbank effortlessly demonstrated that *A Doll's House*, available to conference members in Adrian Noble's brilliant production, can serve to illuminate Shakespeare's verbal mastery.

In the afternoons, a series of workshops, and of twenty-four seminars, encouraging active participation by most of the enrolled members. Trevor Nunn, John Barton, and other members of the RSC gave generously and fascinatingly of their time and talents. A seminar on "Shakespeare on the Socialist Stage" attracted East European delegates. One on translation numbered representatives of eleven nations in its

thirteen participants. Film and television versions were deliberated. The current productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale* received their share of attention. A discussion of feminist critical approaches - twelve women and three men were participating - is alleged to have occupied twice its allocated time-span before adjournment to less formal surroundings. Evenings were occupied mainly by visits to the Theatre and The Other Place.

And all the time, fringe events: a visit to Warwick Castle, and to Coventry to see the Mystery plays; a poetry reading; exhibitions; video tapes of television productions; meetings of editorial boards and administrative committees; invitations to lecture, to review books, to write articles. And, perhaps as important as anything else, the forming and re-forming of professional and personal contacts, matching of faces to well-known names. Introductions to senior scholars of younger ones who will occupy their places a generation or two hence.

In the closing plenary session, G. E. Bentley brought us firmly back to the image of Shakespeare as a dramatist of his own time, concerned with the presentation of his plays in the theatre, not at all with their preservation for posterity. If the conference did not pluck out the heart of Shakespeare's mystery, at any rate its delegates had the satisfaction, at the final feast, of literally dismembering and devouring him, in chucolate effigy.

Christopher Logue's "Examinations Every Night", reminiscences of his acting debut in last year's Royal Court *Hamlet*, is one of the essays in a special "Verse Drama Double Issue" of the magazine *Arden* (available in £3 or \$9 from 5 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London: SW11 4PE). Other essays include A. D. Moody on T. S. Eliot, Richard Jacobs on Beckett, John Heath-Stubbs on Ibsen, John Gurney on Christopher Fry and James Morwood on Stoppard. In addition there are plays in verse by Peter Dale and John Gurney, and reviews by Michael Alexander, Dennis O'Driscoll and others.

DAVID BAIN is the author of *Actors and Audience: A Study of Asides and Related Conventions in Greek Drama*, 1977.

ALAN BOLD is currently completing a book on twentieth-century Scottish literature and a critical study of Hugh MacDiarmid.

ANNE BORN's translation of Karen Blixen's *Letters from Africa*, which was published in America earlier this year, will appear in this country in September.

LOBO BAIROS is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford. His books include *Victorian Cities*, 1963.

JAMES CAMPBELL is editor of the *New Edinburgh Review*.

SUSAN CAMPBELL is the editor of the *Guide to Good Food Shops*.

RICHARD COBS is Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford. His recent books include *Death in Paris 1793-1801*, 1978, and *Prisoners*, 1979.

NIGEL CROSS is writing a book on the conditions of nineteenth-century authorship.

MASOLINO D'AMICO is lecturer in English at Rome University.

O. W. DUNLAP's books include *Plants and Archaeology*, 1980.

J. E. DOWNS is the translator of Gogol's *Nos Noa*, 1980.

DENNIS DUNCANSON is Reader in South-East Asian Studies at the University of Kent.

DOUGLAS DUNN's new collection of poems, *St. Kilda's Parliament*, will be published in September.

to the editor

J. K. Galbraith

Sir, - Professor Skidelsky's elegant review of J. K. Galbraith's autobiography (August 7) starts by evoking the image of intellectual obsolescence. "Statist liberal intellectual" of the Galbraith variety, inhabit "a neo-liberal clubland . . . increasingly confined to persons of a certain age. Its expertise was decreasingly in demand. Its conversation showed a marked tendency to revert to the theme of the good old days. . . ."

True, in the final sentence of the review, Professor Skidelsky concludes "they [Galbraith's virtues] may not be enough to win a wider world; but they are necessary ingredients of one". Nevertheless, I suggest that Skidelsky has misjudged the market, mistaken a temporary swing of the pendulum for a permanent movement of the tectonic plates, and failed to notice that his clubland heroes are still alive, still working hard, and are being joined by many of youthful vigour.

Nobody believes that Galbraithian "problem solving by means of deliberate State action" is the sole intellectual task. Galbraith's books solve no problems - they contributed mightily to the intellectual debate. But problem solving is important, is a worthy occupation, and if I am induced to share Skidelsky's worries at all, it is that in his and younger generations there is too much attention to the intellectual fun and games of chasing hares round the intellectual race-track, and too little time given to the equally demanding task of trying to be useful.

Galbraith's wit and irony have been often (not always, and certainly not always successfully) employed in useful pursuits. Social problems have not disappeared just because some intellectuals (young and old) have become bored with them. I would not wish Skidelsky's own very considerable powers of wit and irony to distort that truth, or to leave the field to the extremists of both wings.

MICHAEL POSNER.
Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Keeping up Greek

Sir, - In his eloquent review "Keeping up Greek" (August 7), Richard Jenkyns asks rhetorically "who . . . can forget the terse incantatory lyricism of the verses teaching the use of prepositions? . . . 'Palom, cum, and ex and e.' I fear that the answer is, Mr Jenkyns himself, for the line normally reads 'Palom, clam, cum, ex, and e.' In this pedantic vein, I shall add that the joke about *quippe qui* and *upote qui* is first found in *Some Oxford Translations* (1949), p. xxx, where T. F. Higham backdates it to 1912; and that *Charities* is so spelled.

J. H. C. LEACH.
Pembroke College, Oxford.

Milton's Library

Sir, - May I resume a correspondence started in your columns on October 24, 1936, and continued on December 19 of the same year concerning a volume in the library of the General Theological Seminary in New York City?

In the first letter Mr. K. W. Cameron drew attention to a volume of eleven Civil War tracts which, he concluded on the basis of an alphabetical tabulation still visible on several of the title-pages, once contained two additional tracts at the beginning and possibly another at the end. He noticed that someone in the seventeenth century had written "J. . . . Milton gent." on the title-page of one of the undated tracts, *The Plot Discovered*, otherwise unidentified, and thought the name had been inserted by John Milton, an identification which Mr. M. Kelley did not corroborate in the second letter.

I should like to add a postscript to this correspondence. I recently came across an entry on the last page of a catalogue of the library of Sir Edward Dering, Bart. (1598 - 1644) in the Folger Shakespeare Library which reads:

Mr Milton: the plot discovered. London. 1640.

There remains a slight mystery as to the actual extent of Sir Edward's knowledge of contemporary publications. The second tract mentioned in Sir Edward's catalogue as being in the volume containing *The Plot Discovered* is by John Milton and yet is entered under the title only - "An advertisement upon the Remonstrance defence against Smeatymnus - London. 1641". However, on another page in the catalogue, written by Sir Edward himself, is the entry "A modest confutation of a scurrilous libell entitled *Animadversions upon the Defence against Smeatymnus*, p. m. Mylton ut dictur - London. 1642".

THE LATEST book entered in the catalogue is dated 1642: Sir Edward himself was caught up in the turmoil of the Civil War and died in June 1644. Is it possible that the date 1640 (which would include the first three months of 1641) and the attribution of *The Plot Discovered* to John Milton (1608 - 1674) may be correct?

LAETITIA YEANDLE.
The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC 20003.

Horace Walpole

Sir, - Colonel Crowder's letter (July 3), aimed at vouching a specifically British opinion of the many excellencies of the late William Stedon Lewis's editorial work, appears to have stirred up some inappropriate controversy. Nigel Aston's letter (August 7) with its demand for a paper-backed selection of the existence of Lewis's letters to Horace Walpole, edited by W. S. Lewis, published by the Yale University Press in 1973 (ISBN 0 300 01669 7) in a paperback edition now before me.

ALAN BELL.
18 Ann Street, Edinburgh EH4 1PJ.

PETER WILLIOTT is the co-author with Charles Madge of *Inner City Poverty in Paris and London*, which is published this week.

The mongrel of Merseyside

By Asa Briggs

P. J. WALLER:
Democracy and Sectarianism: A political and social history of Liverpool 1868-1939. 556pp. Liverpool University Press. £32.50. 0 85323 074 9

Charles Dickens was one of the few visitors to nineteenth-century Liverpool who left it for London "with a certain feeling of depression". Yet even visitors who disliked its sharp social contrasts were struck by its excitement. Thus, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who served as American Consul there in the 1850s and who never walked through its crowded working-class streets without feeling, in his own words, "as if I should catch some disease", was not alone in enjoying its "bustle" and the sense of being "in the midst of life".

Many twentieth-century visitors both before and since the Beatles have shared such contrasting sensations. The contrast, indeed, is that of the social scenes of Liverpool itself, reflecting, it was once said, "the insolence of riches" on the one hand and abject poverty on the other. J. B. Priestley, however, in the course of his "English journey", decided after a busy day there in the 1930s that "somebody else must give a plain fair account of this great city: the task in the time was beyond me". So instead "I bought myself a good cigar".

Historians also have usually shied away from this great mercantile city, drawing quick contrasts of their own with industrial Manchester or traditional Bristol. Now at last, after a confession, rather more than one, that Philip Waller has set out to give an account of the politics of the city from 1868 to 1939; he even adds a brief and sketchy epilogue about Liverpool between 1945 and 1980. If, because of his more narrowly defined scope, the book does not quite meet Priestley's commission at every point, it successfully relates Liverpool politics - often raw politics - to Liverpool society. This was always a society with problems, even as early as 1795 when Liverpool was described as "large, irregular, busy, opulent and corrupted". Moreover, Mr Waller never papers over any cracks: there is nothing "official" about either his account or his conclusions. The Liverpoolians who people his pages are very different, therefore, from the Liverpoolians of some earlier histories. Some of the leaders amongst them are, in his carefully chosen phrase, "flawed personalities": others are *posteurs*. It is not always easy to judge whether they made the city or the city made them.

For such reasons it is advisable to supplement Waller's narrative from other sources (which he himself does not assess in his bibliography), such as Brian White's *A History of the Corporation of Liverpool, 1835-1914*, which appeared, also under the imprint of the Liverpool University Press, thirty years ago, or Mrs Simey's admirable *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century*. Waller himself recognizes - or half recognizes - the difficulty: "Much local history does not bave advantages of ready manageability and circumspcctness"; yet he does not try to overcome it.

Four clear themes emerge, nonetheless, from what is undoubtedly a pioneering study, and one without a rival. First, it examines with penetration religious friction and sectarian strife in Liverpool. "God seemed very far away in Liverpool", Hugh Walpole once wrote, but if this was true it was certainly not because either clergyman or politician were remiss in invoking His presence. Sermons could turn into calls not for compassion but for angry action, revivals into riots. White mentioned Wile only once: Waller has many pages about him (and the size and influence of his Bible class). He also goes back (necessarily) to M'Neill, and

even earlier. Even when there was no violence in the streets in Liverpool, the language of sectarian dispute could be violent, and advocates of temperance were as adept in handling it as were the publicans and sinners.

Not surprisingly, there is much in this book about Liverpool and Belfast - enough, indeed, to demonstrate how dangerous it is to separate English and Irish history, although Waller, perhaps optimistically, while noting the upsurge of "racism", gives the year 1938 as that of "the last sectarian rally". The continuing power of sectarianism in Liverpool, which should be compared with that in Glasgow, qualifies over-simple verdicts on the secularization of politics, whether made by historians or by politicians. When Jack Jones ended the Prayer Book debate in 1927 with the observation that most working-men were more interested in rent-books than prayer-books, there were certainly thousands of Liverpoolians who would have disagreed.

Secondly, Waller explains how and why Liverpool conservatism was both strong and distinctive, a heady brew which Gladstone (whose ambivalent attitude to Liverpool was reciprocated by the city) described as "demagogism . . . living upon the fermentation of angry passions, and still in secret as obstinately attached as ever to the evil principle of class interests". Five very different men were responsible for the strength of popular conservatism before and after Gladstone - Bold, Wile, Forwood, Salvadge and White. Liverpool society itself made their achievement possible, and they were far more socially "fluent" than the Liberals in finding the right language and behaviour. They could certainly play more easily with loyalties and prejudices, if not with ideas. In 1885, for example, Forwood's party won eight out of nine Liverpool seats and 59 per cent of the votes cast; while in 1906 Salvadge's party won six seats and the Liberals two. Not until the Liberal Party had given way to Labour, and even then not until 1945 (with a swing well below the national average), were the Conservatives reduced to as few as three out of what were by then eleven Liverpool seats. (Scotland was one of only three constituencies in the country which returned a Labour candidate unopposed).

Waller's picture of Liverpool proletarian conservatism (and of the

Working Men's Conservative Association founded in 1868) is particularly well done. For White, Salvadge's ascendancy as a machine politician marked "an attempt to get away from the inconvenient necessity of having to stand or fall on a definite practical policy and to rest the Tory majority once more on the secure foundation of immutable prejudice". Waller prefers as a description Theodore Roosevelt's simple maxim, "There are no politics in politics". Later he writes equally simply that "Salvadge placed deals before ideals". The nine pages on the fall and death of Salvadge in 1928 are particularly illuminating. By then J. L. Garvin could call him "one of the biggest men in England", and Derby, who had been fighting against him, admitted that his death left everything "in hsholute chaos".

Third, and this is the corollary of the second point, Liberalism was "a creature of stunted growth in Liverpool" and "the Liberals were unable to dictate the movement of Liverpool politics for long". There was a Liberal majority on the Council from 1892 to 1895, the first in fifty years, but at the 1892 General Election the Conservatives held seven of the nine seats. The Liberal administration was unlucky in its timing - economic depression - and already Labour was on the march. Following the 1895 elections the Conservatives increased their membership from 29 to 64, and Derby became Lord Mayor by 82 votes to 11.

Fourth, it was not until the Edwardian years that the Labour Party established a foothold in Liverpool, and even then it found it just as difficult to challenge Conservatism as the Liberal Party had done. Waller's portrait of James Sexton, however, is far more favourable than his portraits of any nineteenth- or twentieth-century local Liberal leader (he barely touches on the recent Liberal revival in Liverpool, its personalities or its programmes). Sexton was realistic enough to recognize that the dockers from whose ranks he came - very different from a factory-based working class - were not always "true to my Labour standard". He lived long enough to see a tacit (sometimes open) defensive understanding between Conservatives and Liberals to keep Labour out.

Waller includes a good chapter on industrial strife between 1911 and 1914, although he deals rather too sketchily with the position of Labour

discovery and understanding of everything connected with the railways that have now vanished, by means of the study of such evidence as remains. His book, based on exceptionally wide knowledge and experience, is intended as a guide to that evidence.

Waller's picture of Liverpool proletarian conservatism (and of the

Impermanent ways

By Sherwin Bailey

O. S. NOCK:
Railway Archaeology. 192pp. Cambridge: Patrick Stephens. 58p. 0 85039 451 0

At the end of the nineteenth century it must have seemed that the railways, as they existed then, were destined to endure unchanged (allowing for technical advances) for a very long time, yet the ensuing decades were to dissipate this sanguine expectation. Much of the railway system in Britain has now disappeared, and this has stimulated a kind of romantic nostalgia, focused upon the steam locomotive, which preservationists are seeking to assuage. But preservation has its limitations, and there are many things that cannot now be recovered or restored; yet it is possible to find out a great deal about the railways of the past.

O. S. Nock, whose reputation as an authority on all aspects of the railway is well established, calls such research "railway archaeology" - the

discovery and understanding of everything connected with the railways that have now vanished, by means of the study of such evidence as remains. His book, based on exceptionally wide knowledge and experience, is intended as a guide to that evidence.

He begins with early forms of permanent way and with the first attempts to convert stationary steam engines into locomotives. He then gives examples of the way the railway network evolved; and a fascinating chapter follows in which he shows how abandoned lines can be traced with the aid of Ordnance Survey maps - a branch of railway archaeology that can be pursued even by those who cannot explore the actual sites. Changes in station layout are discussed, exemplified by Euston in particular. Some of the classic and historic structures - viaducts, bridges, and buildings - which have vanished are reviewed, and some notable structures which have so far survived are recorded, such as the Glenfinaan and Ribbleshead viaducts. There is an excellent survey of early signal-boxes and signalling, including later-looking lever-frames. The text is elucidated by clear and apposite illustrations,

maps, and diagrams.

With so large a field to be covered, some omissions were inevitable. The smaller station buildings receive no attention; and such aids to railway archaeological studies, (particularly with Ordnance Survey maps) as working timetables, and the invaluable appendices to the working timetables deserved mention; the appendices in particular contain much that illuminates the past. Railway rule-books also throw light upon methods and conditions of working. More could have been said about the standard signal-boxes of the pre-grouping companies, and the instruments they contained, and about the value of signal-box diagrams in archaeological study. It would have been useful had a bibliography or guide to further study been provided, and also a list of associations, such as the Signalling Record Society, which exist to promote the archaeological study of various aspects of the railways.

Nevertheless, Mr Nock's book, attractively written and produced, should stimulate interest in railway archaeology both among railway enthusiasts and all who enjoy investigating the past.

during the First World War, placing more emphasis on the decline of the Liberal plutocracy than on Labour organization itself. His section on the years 1922 to 1926 leans rather too heavily on national sources, and there is too little on the building up of a Labour machine. "Labour inherited rather than won [Irish] Nationalist seats", he writes, but other seats needed to be captured. The role of the Bradlocks, who "understood de-clamation", is well described - with as much attention being paid to John as to Bessie, particularly after 1948 - but the important point that "the Labour party machine in the 1950s, such as it was, bore an uncanny resemblance to the Conservative machine in the 1920s" needs more development even in a necessarily brief chapter.

There are omissions from this book. We learn little of the relationship between councillors and officials, so that it is impossible to test the validity in Liverpool of theories concerning that relationship recently worked out in relation to Leeds. It is only in the last paragraph that the point is made that "the tradition of a participatory, amateur democracy has been maintained, although the conviction that local government is too scrupulous a matter to be left to the elected councillors has gained". There is a brief note earlier on the electoral system, but we learn little of the extent of popular participation, nor is there much about levels of local rates or modes of rating. Clearly the kind of conservatism which some nineteenth-century Liverpool Conservatives advocated not only cost more money than a doctrinaire Liberalism were prepared to spend, but more than many Conservative ratepayers were keen to pay. Occasionally ratepayer candidates, like independent Protestants, took the stage, but like rats, they do not figure as a category in the index. The attitude of the Labour Party towards spending is also left vague.

Waller clearly prefers words to statistics although, having begun with his chapter on "the character of Liverpool", he ends with statistics and with a telling generalization: "In April 1974 the new metropolitan County Council of Merseyside was born, governing over 1½ million people in one area of 250 square miles. Where once it was very hard to define Merseyside, now it was hard to distinguish Liverpool".

The joys of designing

By John M. Robinson

HOWARD COLVIN and JOHN NEWMAN (Editors): *Of Building: Roger North's Writings on Architecture*. 160pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £17.50. 0 19 817325 3

This well-produced book is primarily architectural history for architectural historians, though it will appeal to anybody interested in the intellectual and scientific ideas of late seventeenth-century England, for Roger North was one of those wide-ranging minds whose enthusiasm embraced almost everything. By profession a lawyer he was also seriously interested in philosophy, music, rural economy and architecture. He is best known as the author of *The Lives of the Norths*, a biography of his brothers, but he also wrote treatises on accountancy, farming and fishponds, which were published in his own lifetime, and an essay on music which was printed in 1959.

His writings on architecture, composed between 1687 and 1698, which are now published for the first time from the original manuscripts preserved in Rougham Hall and in the British Library, were the outcome of his own experience in rebuilding his country house. They are among the pioneer writings on architecture in the English language, well arranged, intelligent, vividly written and full of valuable insights into the aesthetic philosophy of his contemporaries. There is also a fascinating discussion on the architectural history of houses in England from a seventeenth-century viewpoint.

Roger North was the youngest member of a talented Tory family. Their father Dudley, fourth Lord North, had had a varied career as soldier, MP and author but was not

well-off, the family having been impoverished by Royalists in the Civil War. As usual in English families (unlike Continental ones), all his sons except the eldest had to make their own way in the world as lawyers, merchants and scholars. All did well. Francis became the Lord Chancellor and was created Lord Guildford; Dudley was a merchant who made a fortune at Smyrna and Constantinople and returned home to become Sheriff of London, a Commissioner for Customs and a Lord of the Treasury; John was a scholar who became the Professor of Greek at Cambridge and Master of Trinity. As for Roger, Lord Clarendon considered him one of the only two honest lawyers he had ever met and he became in due course steward to Archbishop Bancroft, Solicitor-General to the Duke of York, and after the latter's accession to the throne, Attorney-General to the Queen and MP for Dunwich. On the fall of James II and the triumph of the Whigs in 1688, he retired to Rougham in Norfolk where he had bought an estate, married at the age of forty-three and founded a family (still at Rougham) and reconstructed his house to his own design.

Like Wren and Robert Hooke, he probably came to architecture via mathematics and philosophy, but would probably never have become seriously involved except for the fire which destroyed the Temple in 1678. He played a prominent part in negotiating on behalf of the Inn with Nicholas Barbon, the undertaker of the new buildings and it was in the course of this that he came to know "the joys of designing and executing known only to such as practise or have practised it". He bought all the architectural textbooks he could lay his hands on, especially Palladio and Scamozzi, taught himself the principles of perspective and spent many happy hours drawing buildings "which might have been better and more profitably employed".

His best-known building is the Great Gateway to the Temple from Fleet Street, yet how many of those who see it realize that he designed it and not Wren? He also designed a stable block for his brother Lord Guildford at Wroxton Abbey in Oxfordshire. But his chief work was the remodelling of the old house at Rougham. He added a gallery at the back, regularized the front and built a portico. Unfortunately his grand-son Fountain North had such a wretched childhood (his father flogged him severely and he ran away to sea) that when he inherited, he demolished the house because of its unhappy associations. Nothing now remains of Roger North's work there save some avenues, a dovecote and one Ionic capital from the portico re-used as a sundial.

Thus it is this treatise on Building which is the principal memorial to his architectural activity. It is the most detailed account of the planning and building of a seventeenth-century English house. But though related to a specific place, it is intended to be a general treatise intended to guide successors with Wren on site at St Paul's Cathedral and with "my good friend Mr Hugh May,

who reformed Windsor". Thus it is of particular importance as the writing of an intelligent man who treats of matters that occupied the minds of leading professional architects, like Wren or May, but who were themselves too busy to have time to set down their thoughts on paper.

It is written in an appealingly vivid style. For example, he says of building in general: "It is a noble subject, and hath engaged the greatest spirits... and also the poorest of workmen; it is like a stately fruit tree, that grows out of a foul soil, that is beautiful, and the fruit of it delicious... it is the sweat of the poorest of labouring men, who out of the slime and filth of the earth, present us with all the magnificence, security and ease we have." The pages are stuffed with succinct opinions such as "nothing is so sure a forerunner of a statesman's downfall, as his building a superb fabric." His pithy dismissals of the bad taste of others are especially entertaining: "The painting for the most part of various affected colours, which please the ignorant and nauseate the knowing." These remarks are most in evidence in his strident analyses of contemporary houses: Euston (rooms too low, too much money spent to too little effect); Melton

Constable (too like a compact suburban villa for a country seat); Hampton Court (too flat, even and insipid); Felbridge (too harsh a juxtaposition of old and new); Buckenham (rooms too low, the cupola leaks). On the other hand, he thought Tring exceedingly well contrived and Raynham generally "noble and pleasant". Like most of his generation, he thought Classical architecture infinitely superior to Gothic, which looked "as if the while should seem to stand on knitting pins", but like Wren was not entirely unsympathetic and genuinely admired Westminster Abbey and King's College Chapel.

Roger North was writing primarily for the "reformer of an old house" rather than for somebody building from scratch, ideally a country gentleman in retirement after a successful career. Anybody who is interested in architecture and has some historical sense will enjoy this book. Reading it is like a conversation with an intelligent companion from the past. It would be ideal for winter evenings in an old country-house, while snugly ensconced before a log fire with a glass of port, and contemplating whether or not to re-roof the dovecote or add a "frontoon" to the façade.

Looking for a likeness

By Peter Greenham

JAMES LORD: *A Giacometti Portrait*. 117pp. Faber. Paperback, £2.25. 0 571 11668 X

Perhaps it is one of the signs of a good book that it makes you think of others still to be written. James Lord's account of his eighteen sittings with Giacometti makes you long for other books by a sinner about a painter, and even by a painter about a sitter.

At the end of each session, Mr Lord put down what they had said to each other. There are ups and downs. Giacometti is often displeased with what he has done, though sometimes he permits himself to say he has made a little progress. Lord succeeds in giving the book the suspense of a tale by constantly threatening to fly home to New York. Will he stay two more days? Another week? We only know for certain on the last page. The subplot, as it were, comes from the doubt which Giacometti proposes for himself - will it be a good likeness at the end? At times it seems as if each day's work was a quest for the simplest kind of accuracy. The painter asks his sitter: Have I made the neck too long? Is the left cheekbone right? Does the head sit on the shoulders? It makes you wonder, as it does with lesser artists - if he had got it right first go, what would he have gone on to do? Out of what would he have made the map and contours of paint?

Nothing could be more different from the methods of the old masters, who knew each stage in advance: there was the outline, then the underpainting in a neutral colour, then the darks kept thin, the middle tones, and lastly the lights loaded. Giacometti said he never knew what the painting was going to be like, but even James Lord, exhausted perhaps by the professions of dismay and incompetence, which he took to be a mark of his own shortcomings as a sitter, came to the conclusion that there was something more important than the painting - "which didn't seem to matter much". "What meant something", he writes, "What alone existed with a life of its own was his indefatigable struggle with the act of painting in express in visual terms a perception of reality that had happened to coincide momentarily with my head." And Giacometti mutters "It's hopeless. How can I make a nose really perpendicular in relation to the body? The simple fact is that I don't know how to do anything."

To keep on saying that nothing will come of it, that it's impossible, goes some way in the end to reinforcing a distinction between the fecund artist, like Picasso (whom Giacometti belittles), and the artist who, if he is great, is so not by virtue of his variety and fertility, but by his obsession with an image; an image which he has discovered himself. When Giacometti says "Drawing is the basis of everything; but the Byzantines were the only ones who knew how to draw. And then Cézanne. That's all", he confirms the impression which the journal gives of an artist whose limitations were his strength. In the end, in spite of his honesty, his warmth, his heroic and cantankerous simplicity, exasperation might have been the reader's response, but luckily the exasperation takes no harsher form than wishing that Holbein's sitters, or Rembrandt's, had kept a journal like Lord's and noted down the painter's

methods. What would Mrs. Molesworth have had in say of Ingres, who pondered her portrait for twelve years? At the end we take away - apart from some bewildering over the eighteen smudgy photographs which record the progress of the portrait - a sudden elation, echoing Lord's release from sittings, as well as Giacometti's belief that the portrait was not, after all, a failure; something almost jaunty, something to do with the taxi to the terminal, the baggage, a last cup of coffee before the departure; but more to do with the abrupt exchanges which passed for conversation between the two; and most of all to do with Giacometti and his vision. For, what Lord implies about the process being more important than the product, the finished portraits (if the phrase can be permitted), in all their tension and oddity, are what makes an account of the process exciting.

Campus crafts

By J. M. Richards

SHERBAN CANTACUZINO: *Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amls Architecture*. 128pp. Lund Humphries. £12.50 (paperback, £9.95). 0 85331 444 6

Albums illustrating the work of one contemporary firm of architects seldom make satisfactory publications. They are not the place for radical criticism and most of the work they show is too recent to be ripe for definitive evaluation. The result often appears a mere exercise in public relations. That is avoided in this instance with the help of a long and thoughtful introduction in which Sherban Cantacuzino makes a serious attempt to describe the buildings of Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amls in terms of the idiom the partners have gradually evolved since all four worked in the London County Council's Architect's department during its most creative period (the late 1930s), leaving in 1959 to set up in practice together.

They have made an interesting and varied enough contribution to justify putting it on record. It has remained remarkably consistent in quality considering that Killick died in 1972 and Howell in 1974 - only a couple of years after his appointment in the chair of architecture at Cambridge.

Much of their work has been for universities, where the relationship of new buildings to well-established settings is generally paramount. These architects are too intelligent to resort to the more cowardly forms of compromise, but their most prominent work at the older universities is the least successful in that respect: a trio of buildings walled with abruptly modelled precast concrete panels which many have found insensitive. St Anne's and St Antony's Colleges are somewhat harsh intruders into North Oxford and the University Centre into the river front at Cambridge.

By contrast these architects' additions to Downing College, Cambridge, are a model of intelligent grafting of new on to old and a demonstration that in doing so has many of scale and materials are more important than similarity of style. Most of their other buildings, using brick and timber instead of concrete and frequently with wide-eaved, low-pitched roofs, are humane in the sense that, say, the University Centre is not and some have an engaging Japanese flavour which it would have been interesting if Mr Cantacuzino, in his careful analysis of the firm's work, had endeavoured to explain.

All the firm's projects are illustrated, including their competition entries whether successful or not. The photographs, are well reproduced. Some of the plans are too small to be intelligible.

The occupation of the land

By John Lucas

EDWARD THOMAS: *A Language Not To Be Betrayed*. Selected prose with an introduction by Edna Longley. 200pp. Carcanet. £9.95. 0 85635 336 1

In his study of *Walter Pater* Edward Thomas wrote that "Only when a word has become necessary to him can a man use it safely; if he try to impress words by force on a sudden occasion, they will either perish or his violence or betray him". And in the course of a particularly powerful passage, where he identifies what is in Pater's prose style that most displeases him, Thomas remarks that "it retained no sign of an original impulse in it. If there had been a strong impulse the after elaboration had worn it completely away. This detachment made language seem to be as hard and inhuman a material as marble, and like marble to have had no original connection with the artist's idea". To read through this selection of Thomas's prose is to become aware of something which his poems also declare and everywhere embody: that a writer's language must be personal to him, but that it must also speak for a deep attachment to those realities from which the language derives and which it identifies.

This essential conviction of Thomas's has been best expressed, I think, by Stan Smith, in an essay of outstanding merit, the title of which is identical with the book under present review, and which appeared in the journal *Literature and History* (No 4, Autumn, 1976). Referring to the poem "I never saw that land before", from which comes the line "A language not to be betrayed", Smith notes how in the central stanza "a man establishes some actual, tangible relations with the landscape, marking it with his presence... And he adds that the revelation implied in the poem's concluding lines - 'And what was hid should still be hid/ Excepting from those like me made/ Who answer when such whispers bid' - is only available 'when a language is shared, when there is bidding and response'. Or as Thomas himself put it in 'Wards', when asking 'Choose me/You English words':

Make me content
With some sweetness
From Wales
Where nightingales
Have no wings
From Whitlure and Kent
And Herefordshire,
And the villages there,
From the names, and the things
No less.

I think it a matter of real regret that Edna Longley does not seem to know of Smith's essay, for her own very fine Introduction in a major critical essay on Thomas (as is her edition of his *Poems and Last Poems*) and her subtle understanding of Thomas would have been usefully complemented by Smith's. Like Smith, she recognizes just how central a poem "Lob-lis" and she unerringly identifies the importance of Thomas's remark that poetry "springs apparently from an occupation of the land, from long, busy, and quiet tracts of time, wherein a man or a nation may find its own soul. To have a future, it must have a past". A perception such as this makes it clear why Thomas felt that he had no option but to fight in the Great War; and it also helps to explain why in a sense all his poems are war poems. For they are deep voicings of an apprehension of England which more truly testifies to an occupation of the land than all the thin and thick volumes of patriotic verse that tumbled from the presses during the years of that war.

There is a further point. For that sense of occupation of the land must be what lies behind Thomas's otherwise surely inexplicable praise for Doughty's "The Dawn of Britain", a would-be epic which I once tried to read but which defeated me before I had gone thirty pages, and yet about which Thomas can say that

I had no worthy sense of the great richness of this home of my race till I found it here; it is not a little matter that some day children will grow up with the conviction of this book in their breasts, with such an harmonious view of early history and folklore and ancient monuments and the physical beauty of Britain as we can only grope for.

Wherever you turn in Thomas you find this concern with occupation of the land. How else account for the way in which, in *The South Country*, he lists as though he is savouring them the names of southern counties and their rivers; and speaks with such familiar affection of the names of sign-boards at cross-roads? And how else account for those quite magical poems to his children "If I should ever by chance grow rich/I'll buy Codham, Cockriden, and Childerich/Roses, Pyrgo, and Lapworts/And let them all to my eldest daughter."? You name the names, the names are inseparable from the places, and they choose you as much as you choose them.

It is this that enables us to understand why Thomas should write with such devastating contempt of Maeterlinck and Swinburne. The essay on Maeterlinck is remarkable for its wise, witty generalizations about the proper and improper use of language. Maeterlinck's poem "Serres Chaudes"

ignores the fact that no word, outside works of information, has any value beyond its surface value except what it receives from its neighbours and its position among them. Each man makes his own language in the main unconsciously and inexplicably, unless he is still at an age when he is an admiring but purely aesthetic collector of words; certain words - he knows not why - he will never use; and there are a hundred peculiarities in his rhythms and groupings to be discovered. In the mainly instinctive use of his language the words will all support one another, and if the writing is good, the result of this support is that each word is living its intensest life.

This is as near as one can come to Thomas's poetic credo. The relationship between a poet and his language is, or ought to be, an intensely personal one from which the poet gets on terms, as it were, and has been utterly banished. So Thomas can even discover what a personal in Pater's style: "Upon he has in say that Leonard was illegitimate, he uses eight words: 'The dishonour of illegitimacy hangs over his birth'. He at once makes the 'dishonour' a distinction with some grandeur: he almost makes it a visible ornament... Nearly every one of the essays in *The Renaissance* opens abruptly. Pater cannot wind into our confidence. He is a shy man, full of 'it may be' and 'we may think', and he has the awkward abruptness of a shy man."

In his review of *Selected Poems of Francis Thompson*, Thomas remarks that Thompson "never seems to have got on terms, as it were, of married familiarity with words, so that they remain in his verse as a permanent memorial of this nympholepsy". Aliter the figure slightly so that you may take account of a different talent, and you arrive at Thomas's judgment on Swinburne. Swinburne has "almost no magic felicity of words": it therefore follows that a poem such as "A Channel Passage" is "an inhuman perversion of language and metre". Much more important, however, is the fact that the adjective is most ready when words are wanted, he used a greater number, yet without equally great variety. He kept as it were a barren of words, in which he was constant and faithful." There then follows an attack on Swinburne's characteristic use of those adjectives which is quite simply one of the best examples of close reading that I have come across, and which makes one realize what a wonderful critic Thomas was. (Interestingly, in the course of dismissing Swinburne's view of England with "The sea-coast round her like a mantle", and "The sea-

cloud like a crown". Thomas remarks that this would be "a grave weakness in a poet who encouraged reading closely with eye and ear".) The demolition of Swinburne is not merely a witty (Rhyme certainly acted upon Swinburne as a pill to purge ordinary responsibilities). It is also criticism that could only be produced by a considerable poet. For its understanding of what is wrong with Swinburne takes for granted an intimate awareness of what poetry should be. True, Thomas called reviewing an unskilled labour, and noted that most reviewers were content with "important-looking abstractions and generalities". But that is emphatically not the case with his own reviewing, which is confident, precise, and just plain right.

Quite why Thomas hadn't committed himself to writing poetry by 1912, when the Swinburne book appeared, can't of course be known. But the usual explanation seems as far as we are likely to get. Thomas remarks of Swinburne that "Other poets tend towards a grace and glory of words as of human speech perfected and made divine, Swinburne towards a musical jargon that includes human snatches, but is not and never could be speech". Where, then, could such speech be found? The answer of course is in the poetry of Robert Frost. "This is one of the most revolutionary books of modern times, but one of the quietest and least agitated." The opening sentence of one of Thomas's reviews of *North of Boston* (he wrote several) makes clear how much Frost meant to him. The language of Frost's poems, he goes on, "is free from the

poetical words and forms that are the chief material of secondary poetry. The metre avoids not only the old-fashioned pomp and sweetness, but the later fishing of discord and fuss. In fact, the medium is common speech, and common deceptibilities. The more dramatic pieces have the beauty of life seen by one in whose mystery and tenderness together just outstrip humour and curiosity." [More curiosity is no doubt dangerous because in its implied aggressiveness it excludes bidding and response.]

Nearly all of Thomas's concerns with and for poetry come together in what he says of Frost; and reading through this marvellous selection of his prose one is bound to share the excitement of his discovery. I suppose that it is a matter of being wise after the event, and yet it is impossible to avoid the feeling that all the time Thomas is on the look-out for the poet who can release his own poetry. He writes with acute, loving perception of Hardy, but Hardy won't quite do: "He cannot escape from his own unified cadence, which at their liveliest suggest old people dancing an old dance, his reluctances and pauses; or from his sombre intellectual vocabulary." Even so, Hardy comes near to what is wanted: in one poem "there is a changing burden which is full of it of magic yet of a deep and strong suggestion of something which the intellect alone cannot handle." Frost, yet it was Frost who said of Frost: "Frost was just and generous to de la Mare [the review of *Pencroch Pie* is a perfect example of the delicate adjustment of tone to the subject so that Thomas can find exactly

the right way to praise the book]; and he writes with lucid understanding about Yeats, Lawrence and Pound. I am not sure whether isolated quotation will demonstrate this, but here he is, for example, on Yeats: "Speech delighted with its own music is the best definition of Mr Yeats' verse." On Lawrence: "He writes of matters which cannot be sublimed to conventional rhythm and rhyme - chiefly the intense thoughts, emotions, or groupings of self-conscious men and women set on edge by love or fatigue or solitude. If he trusts to make a general appeal, it is by faithful concentration on the particular... And, an uncannily prescient remark on Pound: 'He is so possessed by his own strong conceptions, that he cannot think of wrapping them up in conventional form, but he must ever show his disdain for it a little.'"

But it is when he comes to Frost that you know Thomas has arrived at the poetry he wants, from others and from himself. It comes out, above all, perhaps, in the following statement: "There are moments when the plain language and lack of violence make the unaffected verses look like prose, except that the sentences, if spoken aloud, are most felicitously true in rhythm to the emotion." No doubt Thomas knew of Frost's concern with how the rhythms of a poem must be intimately expressive of sentence sound, and of the revelations which such voiced rhythms can bring. But it was Frost who himself began saying, as this volume makes clear, And making it clear is Edna Longley's overlying concern. I do not see how the work she has done could have been done better.

Everlasting moments

By Andrew Motion

EDWARD THOMAS: *The Chessplayer and other essays*. 226pp. Cheltenham: Whittington Press. £14.50. 0 904845 36 2

"I ain't a mystic", Edward Thomas told Gordon Bottomley. But he was in a way. Throughout his life as a writer, he tried in ways of expressing occasional but intense feelings of rapturous communion with the English landscape and its past. Like the Romantics before him, he realized that an essential feature of such "moments of everlastingness" was that they could not be adequately revealed by human language, and in order to admit as well as over-

come this, Thomas often used things or creatures to speak on his behalf - his "Sedge Warblers" are an obvious example. But Thomas also used dreams as analogues of his waking transcendent states, and since he tended to do so more frequently in his (still largely unread) prose than in his poetry, their importance has been comparatively neglected.

The first of these three previously unpublished pieces, "The Chessplayer", is a significant addition to existing examples. It is not an account of rapturous delight but a description of five similar dreams in which Thomas asks whether transcendence involves an evasion of human responsibilities. In every dream the speaker enters a mountain cave and finds "one tall old man" playing chess on a gold table with ivory and ebony pieces. The view from this eyrie is, far at least part of the time,

On the Farm

The track had a green crown
Paint between ruts of frost,
The stream lapped into the road,
I watched his wife stamp past
To tend the trembling calves,
Her face a tearful child's,
Then bumped off on the trailer,
Bale-cord furrowing my arm.

All winter, squalls of rows:
How he'd be gone for days
Playing at eldest son.
She'd say, conspiratorial
I'd call for milk, hear doors slam
And take home his advice -
Don't you get wed - poured out
In anger thick from the jug.

All round, the sparse fields
Picked at by the herds
For roost of bitterness,
And the sharp huddling wind.
That season on the farms,
What only passed as true -
The cottage and my girl -
Didn't outlast the chill.

Michael Vince

similarly sumptuous: white, glittering clouds and light. But these are always dispelled when the chessplayer makes a move. Sometimes rain squalls across his view, and at other moments he sees or hears signs of suffering below - sailors drowning, a man dying, and isolated scenes of anger, hate and uncertainty. In the final dream he expects a similar contest of despair and aspiration as he watches rain across a spring landscape. But when the chessplayer seems to relent, the prospect of rejuvenation becomes more definite, and the speaker throws himself on his knees "in the belief that my bent stillness was protecting that sweet moment of earth from his awful hand". Although its language is often pretentious and self-consciously fine, "The Chessplayer" anticipates a recurrent concern of Thomas's about the unrepresentativeness of poetry. Like "The Other" and "The Glory", for example, it aches for a prolonged "moment of everlastingness" in the knowledge that such things can neither exist nor remain in ignorance of their opposite for long.

The second essay, "The Listener", is better written but less resonant. In it, Thomas discusses half-seriously and half-comically the pleasures and pains of having to hear someone read their own work, and then being obliged to respond with "one of the many prevarications possible". But the third, "Penderyn", is as substantial as the first, and also anticipates major themes in the poetry. Its account of an approach on foot to the Brecknock Beacons and Penderyn Church is a description of a journey to somewhere which, until this visit, had been "little more than a name". As Thomas enters the village he comes across a funeral, and its melancholy factuality combines with his knowledge of local folk traditions to destroy his ideal illusion while deepening his admiration for the actual beauties of the place: "that evening the name was still pure music, perhaps, but earlier than before, more definitely mountainous, perhaps the sweetest place name in the world". The preoccupation with names and naming immediately recalls such poems as "Adlestrop" and "The Thrush". Like the other two stories, "Penderyn" is extremely well worth publishing.

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Agriculture's arrival

By G. W. Dimbleby

STUART PIGGOTT (Editor):
The Agrarian History of England and Wales.
Volume I, Part One: Prehistory
351pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50.
0 521 08741 4

The Agrarian History of England and Wales is a series of eight volumes covering successive periods, of which Volumes IV and VIII are already published. So is the second part of Volume I, edited by H.P.R. Finberg, who died before this text on Prehistory was available. Part One has therefore been edited by Stuart Piggott. It consists of three sections: Early Prehistory, by Professor Piggott himself; Later Prehistory, by Peter Fowler; and Livestock, by Michael Ryder. Ryder's section of which covers the period of the whole volume, that is, up to AD 1042, and therefore, confusingly, goes beyond the chronological scope of Part One.

I do not know what problems caused the delay in the publication of this volume, but the results are serious. The contributions of Piggott and Fowler cover material only up to the end of 1975, while Ryder's section was submitted as early as 1970. So much has been published in the interim that the whole book, and Ryder's section especially, is much reduced in value. It has to be asked whether, despite disclaimers in the preface, publication on these terms is fair to the student, who will turn to such a volume expecting to find it uniformly up-to-date.

The three sections of the book differ widely in their treatment, largely because of the different nature of the subject-matter. Piggott has to set the cultural and environmental context in which agriculture first came to Britain. He explores the contact between the indigenous Mesolithic population and the Neolithic newcomers. He suggests that there may have been contact even

before agriculture was first introduced, and in any case it seems likely that when it did arrive it came into a landscape already modified by man. At this stage interpretation has to be based as much on environmental evidence as on archaeological, but Piggott handles them both with confidence and blends them well. At the end of this section he discusses tillage and gives a very good account of the early cross-ploughing revealed beneath the South Street long barrow, linking it with Continental parallels.

Fowler has a different task, because from the Beaker period onwards there is much more evidence on the ground, evidence of field systems, field boundaries, storage pits, tools, etc. He has brought together a great mass of information and has made a well-argued synthesis of it which it will be very useful to have in a single volume. His discussion of population levels is particularly interesting. While he does not have to rely as much as Piggott on environmental evidence, he does not turn so readily to it and is less facile in his use of it. Despite the object-lesson of Millie's Camp (page 89, footnote), archaeologists tend to cling to artifac-

tual evidence and to distrust environmental evidence, especially if the two conflict. But how does one square the usual interpretation of the setting of hill-forts, as expressed here for instance, with the fact that in one or two cases the ramparts have been shown to overlie a forest soil containing no evidence of clearance? Or again, the archaeological interpretation by A. Fleming that the North York Moors were cleared for arable rather than pastoral farming is preferred to the contradictory evidence from pollen analyses of contemporary buried soils and nearby peat deposits. These are also positive data and the truth must explain them too.

On a more fundamental level, I find it difficult to accept without qualification Fowler's suggestion that in the later prehistoric period man had achieved a symbiotic relationship with his environment. Recent work, the best of it post-dating this text, shows that extensive sheet erosion took place in this period of intensified agriculture. Moreover, soils of low base status, like so many in our highland zone, deteriorated so rapidly that symbiosis could not be established. It may be different

in Wessex where the nutrient status of the soils remained high even after erosion. In his *Soil and Civilization* Edward Hyams suggested that nutrient-rich soils in the equable climate of western Europe were able to withstand the trials and errors of the early agriculturists long enough to allow the development of a stable system. In these terms one might talk about symbiosis, but it cannot be applied universally. I prefer E. S. Higgs's concept of brittle ecosystems, put forward in 1975.

Ryder's section on livestock also draws upon a large body of data, difficult to handle in a readable manner. In complete contrast to the preceding section, this deals almost exclusively with non-artifactual evidence; indeed it is good to see specialists' reports being drawn upon and coordinated in this way. Ryder includes a good account, species by species, of the development of our commoner domestic farm animals, though the discussion on sheep, and particularly of their fleece, is somewhat out of balance, extending beyond the time range of the section. This is the author's own field of interest, and the emphasis is heavily

on British work, with little reference to research elsewhere. Outside his own field Ryder is less reliable. His discussion of the origins of agriculture is very outdated and his views about the ecological status of the chalk downs are not exonerated by the date at which the manuscript was prepared. It is unfortunate, however, that at the time he was writing the second edition of Godwin's *History of the British Flora* was still five years away.

One has the impression that the authors of this volume did not see each other's texts, for there is overlap and discrepancy in detail between them. Some of this would have been avoided if it had been agreed to take Piggott's background chapter as common to all three sections. But there are more serious inconsistencies, such as when Celtic fields were first made. The editor should certainly have standardized the reference systems; Piggott and Ryder only give footnotes, but Fowler gives both footnotes and an alphabetical list of sites mentioned. Such faults, and its tardy publication, detract from what is otherwise a well-conceived and welcome textbook.

Farming without fences

By Michael Havinden

TREVOR ROWLEY (Editor):
The Origins of Open-field Agriculture
258pp. Croom Helm. £14.95.
0 7099 0170 4

This is undoubtedly an important book. It directs much light on to one of the most obscure and yet most fundamental problems of early British history, for it was the settlement pattern based on the open fields, with their common rights of grazing, which was ultimately responsible for that most typical of our small settlements – the village. A countryside of hamlets and isolated farms is characteristic of enclosed fields. It was the open fields which created our landscape of villages and all that they imply.

Trevor Rowley has assembled a multi-disciplinary team of ten historians, geographers, and archaeologists who are all in the forefront of recent work on open fields. Conceptually, the problem has two dimensions: causal and chronological, which are normally closely linked, though there are examples in the book of authors who agree on causes yet differ on chronology.

It was not to be expected that ten authors approaching a problem from different viewpoints would reach a simple agreement, though there is perhaps a closer coincidence of view among them than Rowley implies in his preface. A virtue of the book is that it does not become bogged down in a sterile dispute about what types of system may be legitimately described as "open field." Rather, it takes a broad view and accepts that any unfenced field used for growing corn, in which the holdings of the farmers were sub-divided (usually but not necessarily into fairly lengthy strips) and which was thrown open for common grazing after harvest and during fallows, constituted part of an open-field system.

The debate about the origins of the open fields is one of the oldest in English history. For many years the consensual view was that the system was brought over to England from Germany by the Anglo-Saxon invaders, c. 450-650, and imposed on the disintegrating remains of the Roman villa-farm and the Celtic hamlet-settlements surrounding them. One of the troubles with this theory is the considerable evidence for open fields in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, where the English never settled. Ever since F. Seebohm argued for pre-Saxon origins in his celebrated study of 1883, *The English Village*, Community, the view that the Saxons inherited existing open fields has had supporters. Indeed, Clavinilla Jones in this book argues convincingly for the origins of open-field systems in the pre-Saxon period, and Celtic England before the Saxon invasion.

However the drift of most recent research has been in the opposite direction. Joan Thirsk has elsewhere argued that the system did not fully mature until fairly late medieval times (c. 1150-1350) when rising population, acting through partible inheritance, provided the spur for the minute sub-division of holdings into strips and all the associated aspects of the system. The majority opinion amongst the authors assembled here, is that the system most evolved in late Saxon times (c. 750-1050) for a variety of different reasons. One of the most interesting contributions is by Robert Dodgson, who attempts to provide what he calls a functional interpretation of the origin of open-field systems by combining the varying explanations offered by other scholars into a single explanation extended through time.

This book being the product of a symposium, Dodgson was not able to refer to his fellow symposiasts' chapters when he wrote his own, but it is interesting to consider his theory

in relation to their contributions. He suggests that open fields originated through piecemeal colonization by groups of kinsmen who shared the ploughing and hence divided the land into strips as they ploughed it. This theory is supported by Professor Jones's study of early customary tenure in Wales and also by Della Hooke's examination of early Saxon land-charters in the West Midlands. Later the need to share good and bad land equally, the need to insure against weather risks by dispersing land, and the influence of partible inheritance, elaborated the system until it reached its fullest extent in the classical three-field system of the Midlands.

Dodgson does not commit himself to a particular time-scale but his interpretation would fit well with the late-Saxon period favoured by many of the authors here. Della Hooke's study of the Saxon charters points to the ninth and tenth centuries as the most active period, as does Harold Fox's examination of Saxon and later charters in the Midlands. Bruce

Campbell's analysis of regional variations also points to this period, and he suggests that complex, regularized open-field systems would have been imposed by powerful lords. David Hall's archaeological fieldwork in Northamptonshire also focuses on this period. He has uncovered evidence of earlier Saxon settlements based on hamlets and enclosed fields beneath later open fields. Victor Skipp's analysis of five parishes south-east of Birmingham, where open fields were not very important, indicates a possibly a slightly later date, as do Mary Harvey's study of planned field systems in Hereford, Yorkshire, and Brian Robert's examination of the village of Cockfield in Durham. But these northern examples were somewhat special cases.

With its richness of texture and many detailed case-studies, this book clearly demonstrates that the interdisciplinary study of open fields is highly active. It calls for more research and provides future researchers with an excellent bibliography and plenty of stimulating ideas.

Providing the porridge

By Jim Hunter

ENID GAULDIE:
The Scottish Country Miller 1700-1900
A History of Water-powered Meal Milling in Scotland
254pp. Edinburgh: John Donald. £15.
0 85976 067 7

Until the early part of the present century, mills and millers were of crucial importance to Scottish rural communities. To the local mill was conveyed a large proportion of the annual cereal harvest; from it was obtained the oatmeal which, in the form of porridge and oatcakes, constituted a substantial proportion of the country family's diet. Better communications, rising living standards changed all that. Milling became a highly centralized and highly capitalized business dealing mainly in imported North American wheat. In Scotland as elsewhere, white bread and cornflakes have long since displaced traditional staples. Only a handful of small, water-powered mills of the once universal type remain operational. Others have experienced a fate symbolic of recent social change in the British countryside: they have been converted into luxury homes for wealthy urbanites in search of rural bliss.

The Scottish country miller is, quite literally, a dying breed. It is indicative of Enid Gauldie's approach to her subject that she has asked extensively to the survivors

of the poorer members of the rural community. Once such folk were able to abandon meal for more expensive commodities, the country mill was deprived of custom. A craft which originated in medieval times ceased to exist.

The Scottish miller, as Mrs Gauldie reports, has had a bad press historically. Perhaps because of his key part in the food production process, the miller was customarily believed to possess quasi-magical powers. The suspicion with which he was consequently regarded was reinforced by hostility resulting from his local monopoly – a monopoly guaranteed by both custom and statute. Nor was such hostility confined to the miller's clientele. To those advocates of agricultural advancement around 1800 – and, alas, still around 1900 – the miller was the embodiment of the undesirable and archaic rural regulations surrounding milling were representative of much that was wrong with the unreformed order of things in the Scottish countryside.

Mrs Gauldie finds little evidence that millers were as unpopular or as reactionary as has often been alleged. That may not be entirely unconnected with her evident sympathy for the men who are her subject. But her book is more than an extremely readable rehabilitation of the milling profession. It is a thoroughly researched and often fascinating study of a previously neglected topic. Along the way, it does much to elucidate the effects of the transformation of Scottish rural society in the two centuries following 1700.

Life on the land

By George Ewart Evans

G. E. MINGAY (Editor):
The Victorian Countryside
Two Volumes
720pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£25 each; £40 the set.
0 7100 0736 1

The Victorian Countryside takes the form of a collection of essays by forty contributors on the subject of "Rural England in the Industrial Age", the title of the introductory essay by the editor, G. E. Mingay. Ireland, Scotland and Wales receive separate treatment under the somewhat provocative rubric of "The Regions and Their Issues".

The collection ranges widely and imaginatively over the field of Victorian rural history, and is especially

valuable for the inclusion of studies by younger historians on folk life and oral history, aspects that have in recent years added greatly to our knowledge of the past of rural societies. Another feature of these volumes is the illustrations – photographs and reproductions of contemporary paintings, which together comprise one of the most valuable groups of their kind to have appeared in a countryside book for many years. Few of the illustrations have, to my knowledge, been reproduced elsewhere, nor are they merely eye-catching decorations, but are historical sources in themselves. The reader is thus provided with an extra dimension to the material described in the text. A good example is the reproduction of a painting called "A Lincolnshire Gang", showing the children of a rural family being forebodingly wakened for work at early morning by a pair of gang-masters; another picture illustrates the same subject: a child

being comforted by a woman as he lies exhausted in the furrow after a spell of hoeing. These pictures bring home the evils of the gang-system in the Eastern Counties, with greater incisiveness than would be possible in pages of text. The illustrations are complemented by a perceptive essay by the art historian Rosemary Treble who discusses such topics as "Naturalism and Romanticism", and "Sentiment and Realism".

A number of contributions deal directly with the land, and there are some fresh viewpoints on a topic that has figured largely in the writing of agronomists and historians – the contrast between the highland and lowland areas of Britain. In an absorbing essay, "The Land and the Church", Alan D. Gilbert argues that the way in which the land is farmed has social consequences that extend even to religion. Pursuing an insight by Cobbett into the relative scarcity of country churches in the

north of England, he has drawn on the statistics of the Census of Religious Worship of 1851 to show that a strong Anglican bias existed only towards the south, the south-east, the south Midlands, and East Anglia. "It was no accident", he writes, "that this broad pattern of Anglican religiosity coincided with the distinctive geographical and sociogeographical zones identified by the well-known 'lowland-highland' distinction." Gilbert's use of the word "religiosity" seems to indicate a belief that other factors were at work in securing attendance at church in the lowland arable areas. Certainly, this was the case in East Anglia prior to the First World War when church attendance was invariably enjoined in the close or squire-dominated villages and even tenant farmers expected their farm labourers to attend Sunday worship.

Landowners acted like princes on their own estates, and their hold extended well into the present century. Their attitude towards field sports, particularly the preservation and the shooting of game, was even more socially divisive and aroused even greater antagonism than compulsory attendance at church. This was particularly so in the arable areas, which from the 1880s until the First World War suffered a near-continuous depression. Game preservation "was the point at which the landowners mobilized their maximum amount of coercive power and displayed most markedly the legal and physical force which maintained the rights of the property owner over the propertyless in the countryside". In many country districts there were, twice as many gamekeepers as policemen: Suffolk had ten gamekeepers for every 10,000 acres of land; and it is likely that this state of affairs induced a liberal parson, the Reverend Henry Worsley of Easton in that county, to affirm that crime and protest were the natural

result of neglect in a paternalistic society.

Yet the landed aristocracy were not all selfish and autocratic, as the section of the book headed "Landed Society", which includes Michael Havinden's essay on "The Model Village", makes plain. Most had a genuine concern for their dependants and they willingly espoused the concept of *noblesse oblige*. But they provided for their dependants' bodily needs, and ostensibly their spiritual welfare, at the expense of their self-respect. Thus the concern developed, in the last analysis, into a useful rationalization for withholding almost absolute power. Many of the dependants were aware of this and they escaped to the comparative, if rather risky, freedom of the town.

These essays cover most aspects of country life in the nineteenth century, including that of the rural craft tradition, dealt with by J. A. Charles and G. L. Turnbull in an informative essay. There is much new information, skilfully presented, but perhaps the work's main contribution is a new view of the Victorian countryside is to be found in the essays on folk life and oral history – strands that during the past few decades have been woven into the fabric of rural history. The technique of taking oral testimony from the countryside has already deepened our knowledge of farming history during the last quarter of the Victorian era. It has enabled the countryside to tell his own story in his own words – a valuable supplement, and sometimes a corrective, to the volumes of written evidence by people who usually come from a different social class. The Victorian Countryside places men and women back in the centre of history, eschewing the excessive preoccupation with trends, influences, and abstractions that has bedevilled much of recent historical writing.

The real Elmdon

By Peter Willmott

MARILYN STRATHERN:
Kinship at the Core
An anthropology of Elmdon, a village in north-west Essex in the nineteenth century
301pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50.
0 521 23360 7

This is the latest addition to a small but expanding shelf of anthropological studies of rural communities in Britain. Elmdon is a small (300-odd population) village in north-west Essex, fourteen miles from Cambridge. As Audrey Richards explains in a foreword, she had a house there, and from 1962 used the village as a research laboratory for a succession of Cambridge students. The author of this book was one of them, and Frances Oxford, who contributes an epilogue on Elmdon in 1977, another.

Kinship is the anthropologists' central subject, not surprisingly in view of its importance in the societies they have traditionally studied. *Kinship at the Core* is, however, not a detailed account of kinship relationships. It includes something about the practical help given by relatives and about family gatherings, but gives disappointingly little detail about kinship patterns or their role in people's daily lives. The central interest is the residents who described themselves – and were described by others – as "old Elmdon", or more often "real Elmdon". Miss Strathern sees them as the "core". Who were these people? Why were they so important to the village?

The facts are that these "core families", cross-linked by kinship, identified by their family names and accounting in 1964 for about a third of the residents, were four kin groups of predominantly agricultural labourers, based in Elmdon since the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The focus of the book is on the ways in which these families were perceived, and the ways in which these perceptions were used to structure the social worlds of family members and of others in the village.

Folk history does not always tally with the evidence. Records of births and deaths, and carefully constructed genealogies, showed for instance that there were other families that had been in Elmdon longer than two of the four "real" families, and that kinship relationships could be traced between the two family groups bearing the same name but universally believed to be unrelated.

In showing how such mistakes could be made, Strathern throws light on the character of the British – indeed the Western – kinship system. In general, kinship in Western societies is in anthropological terms "bilateral" (tracing descent through both male and female lines) even though it is "patrilineal" (passing the name exclusively through the male line). This bilateral system has two consequences. First, so difficult

is the task of tracing one's relatives through previous generations that few people have a clear picture outside a fairly narrow range. Most know the name and place of origin of parents' siblings and sometimes of grandparents' siblings as well, but that is about all. Knowledge of family connections usually goes no further than second cousins – the descendants of grandparents' siblings. So it is not surprising if people are hazy about earlier connections or about current kinship ties extending much further than first cousins.

The second point is that, in the absence of a lineage and of clear rules, people in Western societies have a good deal of choice about kinship relations – about which relatives they keep in touch with and which family connections they emphasize. Most adult children maintain contact with their parents and siblings. But how much they see of these people, or of a wider circle of relatives, depends partly on proximity and partly on preference. Strathern argues that this freedom of choice is related to the demands of

She's story

By Susan Campbell

G. E. and K. R. FUSSELL:
The English Countrywoman
Her Life in Farmhouse and Field from Tudor Times to Victorian Age
221pp. Orbis. £10.
0 85613 336 1

The English Countrywoman was published twenty-eight years ago and the reprint seems dated. Reference to "the things that are bought today in the village shop" to "the easy journey we take in steam-heated trains" and "a high charge" of interest at 8 per cent remind us that in 1953 every village had at least one shop, that trains were not only heated by steam but were also driven by it and that the interest on loans had never been as high as it is now. Although the authors state that "the woman question is not new, it has always been discussed", and although the factors governing the female emancipation and the rise and fall of the chapter, it is doubtful if feminists today will appreciate a history of their sex which contains bland statements such as "she" (the unspecified wife and mother) "was the inferior but not unhappy partner in the matrimonial venture, and she did not revile or revolt against her lot".

The English Countrywoman is marred by error: "salt" appears disastrously instead of "malt", the "matelless" or "Glorious" Orinda is named as Katherine Phillips on page 83 and as Catherine Phillips fourteen pages later. We are not told that, without precise attributions, the book is written for the general reader but he or she is left to guess at

what is meant by skirrets, sallets, sarnesins, cofers, camel, peppergrass, nappie ale and a gallon of bread; it is difficult to believe that most people have heard of "no last person than Sir Matthew Hale". Gin is not "made from juniper berries", but flavoured by them, nor does "ginger" need to be "disgusted" with spices, rather it is ennobled by them. On the subject of food and drink the Fussells are not always reliable. Dorothy Hartley has shown in *Food in England* (1954) that the diet of both rich and poor was more varied and interesting than the Fussells would have us know.

On the other hand, *The English Countrywoman* is well held together. What is shown how the lives of countrywomen were changed to the greater or lesser extent by events in the world at large. One cannot help but feel the greatest respect for our housewife predecessors whether in the isolation, industry and self-reliance of a great Tudor household, where women were responsible for all the clothing, food, medicine, lighting and domestic welfare of the people under their roof or in the dramatically different comforts and mobility enjoyed by their Victorian counterparts.

The English Farm Wagon: Origins and Structure by J. Gwynn-Jones (248pp. David and Charles. £8.95. 0 7153 8119 9) is the third edition of the book which was first published in 1961. Based on a survey carried out in the 1950s, it covers the origins, distribution and structure of the English farm wagon, discussing the evolution of wagon-building techniques and the main types of wagon characteristic of different parts of the country. The book also contains a catalogue of wagons in museums in England and Wales.

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Unnatural hazards

By David Snow

KENNETH MELLANBY:
Farming and Wildlife
178pp. Collins, £9.50.
0 01 21929 X

"It is clear that modern farming is generally harmful to wildlife." With this sentence, amply supported and documented by the preceding chapters, Kenneth Mellanby begins the final chapter of his new book. Nobody is in a better position to give an authoritative account of the subject than he is. For some forty years he has been professionally involved in agricultural science, conservation, and the impact of farming on wildlife in Britain, and as a keen naturalist living in East Anglia, where modern farming has had the greatest impact, he continues to be deeply concerned though now retired. He was involved in work with DDT during the war, soon after its insecticidal properties were recognized, at a time when it seemed to be the perfect chemical. It killed insect pests at dilutions which at that time seemed incredible, yet was practically harmless to man. Later, as Director of the Nature Conservancy's Mowthorpe Experiment Station, he was in charge of a team which carried out much excellent research into the wider ecological effects of modern farming.

The message which comes through is largely but not totally depressing for the naturalist. The effects of drainage, improvement of grassland, eradication of hedges, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and other recent developments are described incisively and fairly, and they are nearly all bad so far as native animals and plants are concerned. Mellanby does not believe that they are necessarily bad in any other way, as some con-

servationists insist, though they may have unfortunate side-effects. He is eminently fair-minded. Of course all this has been said before, but not always so authoritatively. Those who are interested will probably already have read much about it, while those who are not are unlikely to read this book. Inevitably, for the reasonably well-informed naturalist this makes for dull reading, and for a feeling of depression if there is nothing that he or she can do about it. But for active conservationists the book should be useful, as they need to appreciate the farmer's case. One would like as many farmers as possible to read it, while for agricultural policy-makers it should be required reading.

Dr Mellanby does not expect British farming practice to alter very much in the foreseeable future, except that it will become even more intensive. As a veteran scientific administrator he sees how small gains may be made, to offset the inevitable losses, and how harmful effects may be mitigated by the exercise of care and, where necessary, controls. There is, however, one way in which a major gain could be made for wildlife: we could stop eating so much meat. Mellanby has argued this case elsewhere (*Can Britain Feed Itself?*, 1975), and he does not mind mentioning it on the last page of this book. We could, it seems, feed ourselves perfectly adequately mainly on cereals, and be self-sufficient, and have land over to use in other ways, including nature conservation. Producing meat is wasteful both of land and of energy. As he says, "The choice is really between two forms of enjoyment - a meat-rich diet or a countryside rich in wildlife." I think that it would have been worth dealing at greater length with this important theme, as readers of this book cannot all be expected to have read the earlier one.

On one point I take issue with

Mellanby, but not with him alone. Discussing the fundamental question, Why should we conserve wildlife? he rightly points out the weakness of the utilitarian or scientific argument, that one should not let species become extinct, if it can be avoided, because one never knows how useful to man they may turn out to be. Unknown plants in the Amazonian forest, which may provide valuable new drugs, are often mentioned. There is very little evidence that this argument is valid for the British flora and fauna, and in any particular case new technological development may demolish it. Instead, Mellanby falls back on the cultural argument: we like wildlife, it is part of our heritage, and without it Britain would be an impoverished country. This is true enough, but the argument is still totally man-centred. The only reason why lions, tigers or giraffes - or marsh harriers in East Anglia - should continue to exist is that they please us, they are part of our cultural heritage. This is the attitude that has been given the horrible name "speciesism", but there is no better word. Surely the forms of life that have evolved over millions of years, just as we have, have a positive right to their existence, quite independent of us, and we must respect that right. Arguments for conservation that ignore this seems to me to be fatally flawed.

Books in Collins's New Naturalist series are always well produced and pleasant to handle and read. This one is no exception. The twenty-four plates of black-and-white photographs are well chosen, all illustrating points of real interest. But on some stages the checking names seems to have slipped up. Of twenty scientific names of birds in the text, seven contain mis-spellings - surely too high a proportion. There are other misprints, but I am sure that the important statistics are accurate.

Chemicals in court

By Kenneth Mellanby

THOMAS R. DUNLAP:
DDT
Scientists, Citizens and Public Policy
318pp. Princeton University Press.
£13.10.
0 691 04680 8

Thomas Dunlap is Assistant Professor of History at Virginia State University and his book is a contribution to the social history of science in modern America. His early training was in chemistry, but this has not made him sympathetic to the followers of his former discipline. He believes that public involvement in problems such as the use of pesticides and other toxic chemicals is the best way of preventing environmental destruction, and that science is too important to be left to the scientists.

The main theme of this book is how "the public" decided to ban DDT in America. It contains detailed accounts of two legal battles, the Wisconsin DDT hearing in 1968 and 1969, and the Consolidated DDT hearing of 1971 and 1972. These were gladiatorial combats between lawyers and "environmentalists" and the chemical industry. Dunlap is clearly a committed partisan who repeatedly denigrates scientists who do not agree that DDT presented "the world's worst pollution problem". Those who disagree were appointed to reporting committees, whatever their qualifications and experience, "to give an appearance of neutrality", and any statement based on research merely "repeated the old platitudes".

Although Dunlap is clearly a biased witness, he does give a useful account of the early history of DDT. He records Rachel Carson's main credit for revealing its danger in *Silent Spring*, published in the autumn of 1962, but he shows that many scientists were aware of the possible harmful effects of the chemical soon after it was first used twenty years earlier. I do not claim to have been the first of these, but the record of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine shows that at a discussion of the new wonder insecticide in 1945 I intervened to suggest that more ecological work on its effects was needed before it was widely released. There were many balanced scientific assessments, published from 1945 onwards, and DDT was often used sensibly with little damage to the environment. Reasonable controls were sometimes introduced.

It would be wrong for us in Britain to be complacent, but our record in this field is very different from that of the USA. During the 1950s scientists in government, industry, and amateur naturalists, particularly ornithologists, were making some progress. The British Nature Conservancy set up Mowthorpe Experimental Station (not Mowthorpe as stated by Dunlap) in 1960 under my direction, with Norman Moore as head of a strong Pesticides and Wild-

life Section. Moore served on the committee which, six months before *Silent Spring* appeared, introduced successful measures to control pesticide use, based largely on ecological observations. Since then there has been continuous discussion between scientists and the industry, and co-operative efforts have allowed sensible pest control with the minimum damage to the environment.

The North American situation was clearly different. This is partly because pests there do more damage than in Britain, and hence provoke stronger reactions. But the thing which this book clearly records, is the polarization of opinions. One reason for this is that the US produces aggressive lawyers like Carol Yarnaccone, who devised the motto for the Environmental Defence Fund - "Sue the Bastards". Instead of calm and fruitful scientific discussion legal confrontation results, with attorneys incapable of understanding that one can seldom give a simple "yes" or "no" to an ecological question on the properties of a pesticide.

The violence of public reaction between 1968 and 1972 was all the greater perhaps because it occurred at so late a date, when other countries, including Britain, had largely solved the problem. 1969 was, in the US, the Year of the Environment, when a belated and exaggerated reaction took place among students and others, fuelled unfortunately by a few scientists who should have known better. They were all doom and gloom, one respected professor prophesying that air pollution would make many major cities uninhabitable by 1975, and the sea sterile by 1978. Some defended such overstatements as being necessary to arouse the public; I believe they were entirely harmful, causing both "overkill" measures (like the banning of DDT) and something which Dunlap admits, a "waning of public enthusiasm in America for environmental issues".

On a world scale the effects of the American ban on DDT have been disastrous, as it has probably led to more deaths than the 1939-45 war. There have been millions of cases of malaria, many fatal, which could have been prevented; and other, more toxic insecticides have been substituted for DDT, resulting in human and animal fatalities. Most insecticides, properly used, do their job (ie, control dangerous pests) with minimum environmental damage.

My major criticism of this book is that the scientific information it contains is so out of date. Little research less than ten years old is included. Since 1970 we have learnt that global contamination by DDT is not rising: levels in fish and birds are falling. We know that DDT is still the most useful existing chemical in many situations, and we know how to use it safely. If, in America, instead of crying "Sue the Bastards" there had been more serious attempts to compromise and to understand the merits and dangers of DDT, many Third World citizens now dead might still be alive.

Down the glen

By Isabel Colegate

AMY STEWART FRASER:
Roses in December
155pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£6.95.
0 7100 0823 6

Amy Stewart Fraser, who is in her eighties, has written two books of reminiscences and one about the games and rhymes of her Scottish childhood. *Roses in December* is a random collection of memories, stories, facts and traditions about Glen Gairn, near Balmoral, where she spent her childhood and where she still spends three months of every year. She was a daughter of the manse, and remembers in detail the life of the farmers and drovers in the Glen, which is now, though much frequented by tourists, almost empty

of permanent inhabitants. Jambousses have been deserted and sheep graze where oats and barley used to grow; the manse too is a ruin. She remembers spreading slates and plough-cases on the burning-green bleached in the sun on washing days, taking pleasure to the burn, the songs her mother used to sing - and the many Scotswomen who wrote traditional songs or were responsible for collecting them. Reminiscences of sheep-gathering and "shepherds' moor", of gypsies, famous walkers, harvesting, weaving, local characters, mingle with stories of Florence Nightingale, Impressing Queen Victoria with her group of daffodils, and the determination, of Edwin falling to shoot a stag because he was making a sketch for "The Monarch of the Glen", of a famous "bushy" from the cold at Balmoral, of a party of ladies marching over the hills, and the spectre known as the Gray Man of Ben Macdui.

The elevation of Ho

By Dennis Duncanson

ARCHIMEDES L. A. PATTI:
Why Viet Nam?
Prelude to America's Albatross
612pp. University of California Press. £7.75. (paperback, £3.50).
0 520 03672 7

When Japan was prostrated by atom bombs in 1945, Ho Chi Minh, unheard of as yet by his fellow countrymen, lay in the jungle stricken with malaria and dysentery. Three weeks later he was ensconced in the seat of government at Hanoi as "Mr President" to the abdicating Emperor of Vietnam. This was set Act I Scene I in the longest and most far-reaching drama of the Cold War. At Hanoi to welcome Ho onto the stage stood a representative of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (an analogue of the Special Operations Executive and precursor of the CIA), in the person of Archimedes L.A. Patti; even Ho's recovery from fever was owed to an OSS dispenser.

America's redoubtable commitment to the Communist cause during the "August Revolution" was known about all through the war, but the Vietnam controversy, but Mr Patti was working as intelligence analyst near, or in, the White House and kept aside - until Michael Charlton approached him in 1977 for a BBC interview. By then, Patti had left President Nixon's service, on the eve of Watergate, and so quit the stage before the last scene in the drama whose opening scene he had set.

The Communists who first seized government offices in Hanoi and Saigon in August 1945 were "red guards" not in touch with Ho Chi Minh; but Ho took over from them in a three-stage coup. In every phase of which he was able to show American support. Before the war, he had been a "Moscow eye" at Mao Tse-tung's headquarters, but he moved south in the Red Army and, ten months after the Japanese occupation of Tonkin, in the role of *royevnik* (adviser) for the Comintern, resuscitated the Indochina Communist Party among Vietnamese émigrés. Takeo hostage by a Chiang Kai-shek general, he drew American attention to himself by means he had used when under arrest ten years before in Hong Kong, namely by sending a report to a Chungking newspaper. Released - at the instance of the OSS - Patti applies - in order to mobilize guerrillas among the border tribes, he offered the OSS at Kunming the services of his "all-Indochina intelligence network" - an offer of breathtaking effrontery in the actual circumstances.

Next, armed with a signed photograph from the "Flying Tiger" Admiral Chennault, a case of revolvers from the OSS, and the goodwill of Patti just arrived from Washington, Ho persuaded the doubting guerrillas to accept into their camps two OSS training teams ("Deer" and "Cat"), with new rifles by the air-droptail, and to "collect intelligence" (as specified for Patti. As soon as Tokyo capitulated, he convened a "Party conference" under the banners to adopt slogans for the seizure of power, as well as a "national conference", with the OSS present, to appoint a "provisional government" that could "welcome the arrival of the Allies". Then, with a "Deer" escort, according to one of the US members, he transferred himself to Hanoi, where he had never been before.

Mr Patti got to Hanoi first, ostensibly with a "mercy team" to care for prisoners-of-war and to make arrangements for the Japanese surrender to Chiang Kai-shek's army. Since he was soon followed by two other teams entrusted with the same missions, and spent a negligible amount of time on either, what he personally achieved was to deter the Communists, with no less so, Ho's takeover. The day Ho himself arrived, the Communists organized a military welcome for the Americans as a demonstration to the locals, and

got that news through to the Emperor, still hesitating in his palace at Huế whether to "surrender" to Ho's emissaries. A week later, four hours after MacArthur took the Japanese surrender at Tokyo, Ho proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with himself at its head, to the salutes of his own army, and two US Air Force lightnings overhead, while the Allied prisoners-of-war, except for two or three Americans, still languished behind the Japanese barbed wire up the road.

Had Patti overstepped his orders? Repeatedly he says he had no precise ones. If a campaign against the Japanese in Indochina had ever been planned, intelligence would have been essential, and once the Japanese had intended all the French, Vietnamese informers sounded promising. But no such plan was drawn up. Later on, after Ho's proclamation, Patti was summoned to Chungking to account for events and mentioned "political warfare" as still behind his task; he never answered the question what that entailed - or the question against whom, after Japan's defeat, it was to be carried out. OSS teams were quite unaccountable, and Patti admits that they joy-ride around Indochina in the hope of "taking surprise" even when ordered not to. Mountbatten, who had charge of the surrender at Saigon instead of Chiang Kai-shek, ordered his Allied Control Commissioner there, General Gracie, to accept an OSS team; but leader made such a nuisance of himself that Gracie ordered him out - too late, alas, to save him from ambush and murder by the Communists he had rashly trusted, rather like his fellow-officer John Birch (commemorated in the John Birch Society) in Kiangsu. Official US policy was neither to help nor to hinder the French restoration of government. Patti saw, and still sees, no inconsistency in his helping the Communists to "rapidly seize power and improvise some form of government". In the prophetic words of Sir Stafford Cripps (Ho's unexpected helper on that occasion to Hong Kong) to the House of Commons.

As Cripps had foreseen, the three weeks between the atom bombs and the Tokyo surrender left a hiatus of legitimate authority all over South East Asia; while the victors feverishly assembled garrisons and sea transports, power was there for the seizing by men on the spot. Some Japanese commanders, waiting for their captivity to begin, saw in this gap the chance for a parting blow against their conquerors, and landed out guns. The only Allied forces ready to move were the mutually jealous intelligence groups - the American SACO, AGAS and OSS, the Franco-British "Force 136", the "exclusive French" "M5". Everybody's first object was to fly in and take stock of prisoner-of-war conditions; but, inevitably, political aims impinged - defensive ones on the British and offensive ones on the 1947 Hague Convention about the duty of occupation forces to "ensure public order and safety while respecting the laws in force"; "king-making" aims for the Americans, fired by the discredited "Lex Wellington" that "conquerors can do as they like". In French eyes, constitutional changes ought to wait for calm to be restored; the Americans saw a golden opportunity to reshape a bit of Asia. Jean Sainteny, head of the OSS in Indochina, was a Frenchman who had absorbed in purging *collaborateurs* that he persuaded the Americans to let him accompany Patti to Hanoi; his 1954 memoirs dwell on his subsequent griefs. Now Patti indulges in page after page of *Schadenfreude* over Sainteny's disfigurement by the Communists. Doubtless Sainteny was a trying intellectual snob; Patti was a rougher, more insensitive, for example, to the anguish of French wives and children at the mercy of the mobs.

It is true that the French war record in Indochina was ambiguous, but that of the Vietnamese, including the Communists, was no less so. One trouble may have been language: Patti says he speaks French fluently; if so, how can he bear to commit so many *fautes d'orthographe* in his

book? He is just as hostile towards Gracie, who was outside his military "theatre" but inside the sphere of Ho Chi Minh's influence and consequently of his own daily concerns at that time. Both Gracie and Sainteny, Patti declares, were unfitted for their duties by long residence in the colonial East - evidently he does not know that Gracie went on to become Commander-in-Chief in independent Pakistan; and Sainteny the admiral and eventually the mourner of Ho - whereas he himself acted with the singlemindedness of one who had not set foot in Asia before. Ten years ago, somebody unkindly published an adverse army report on Patti, which said that he was both ingratiating and self-important and took too much on himself. Ironically, he still shows insensitivity to Ho's true position, for he insists that Ho was "a national before a communist", desperately trying to align his newborn nation with the West - the worst "strategic compromise" a Communist could be damned with in Leninist circles.

Why Viet Nam? runs to 300 words for every hour Patti was in that country. It draws on a memory refreshed from his secret reports ("collected" mainly through Ho's interpreters, but partly from local French socialist informers friendly to Ho) and supplemented with matter suggested by researchers in the USA sympathetic to Ho; it ignores Communist publications intended for Asian eyes. Certainly, Patti corrects or amplifies earlier and sketchier accounts: for example the much-reprinted snap judgment that Nguyen Giap's capture of Dien Bien Phu was the end of the war on August 26, not September 2, 1954; on the other hand, a portrait of Ho which Patti ascribes to the latter date looks like a montage of 1954. A novel piece of information is that a Soviet

counterpart of Patti, Comrade Soloviev, preceded him to Hanoi in order to contact Russian prisoners-of-war from the Foreign Legion; despite "several hours over vodka", however, Patti tells us no more about what became of this surprising individual and his "wards", or about his relations with Ho.

Indeed, for all the space lavished on hearsay about Gracie's iniquities far away, there are a lot of omissions about things near by. How did Ho and Giap get to Hanoi and which OSS men accompanied them? Did Ho really offer food to the masses whom Giap had deliberately terrified with "burnt earth" a few days earlier, as a member of "Deer" has alleged? Did the Vietnamese populace of Hanoi really welcome the tribal guerrillas as co-nationals? Who was on the rostrum with Ho on September 2 - was the deposed Emperor there? Cornered in the BBC interview about the two Lightnings, Patti admitted they flew over at the right moment, "fly accident"; but he does not mention them in his Why Viet Nam? And among all those hours and hours of lunches and dinners and late-night chats with Ho, how can he have forgotten the interview his chief from Chungking had in mid-September with a "Ho flanked by the Emperor and by Prince Souphannouvong" from Laos? Is it because that occasion led to Patti's own recall? He says the whole OSS agency was wound up the day he left Hanoi; but it was not, and he had a successor. He is incensed at Gaullist charges that the OSS had an eye to investment in Ho's new state. All the same, "using captives to destroy capitalism" was a "tactical compromise" which Lenin applauded in 1920, and General Donovan, commander of the OSS, had been one of the Americans Lenin had in mind; Mao dealt the same card to the

"Dixie" mission in 1944-45, and Ho broached the possibility with Patti. It is the latter's complaint that Sainteny tried to bribe him similarly which sounds far-fetched.

Mr Charlton got Patti to admit he had been "naïve" in his dealings with Ho, regarding him as another Gari-baldi; there is no contrition in this book, and it is clear both that Ho's whole scheme for a Communist monopoly of power through association with "the Allies" was disclosed to him from the start, and that all of Indochina was embraced by the Communists' idea of "Vietnam". Unmellowed, Patti clings to his old biases: Communist broadsheets are still "the local press", French newspapers "Sainteny's propaganda machine".

Patti was not alone in this - all the OSS's field officers in Indochina warmed to the good-scout Communists under the greenwood tree - but it was his display of solidarity with the winsome Ho which made the greatest impression on the Vietnamese public. He was susceptible to the impression of "sincerity" with which Ho had won the sympathy even of the Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong in 1952, when he explained that the different "nationalist" parties in Vietnam were distinguishable according to which foreign power they sought patronage from - his own party was then after the patronage of Britain, in 1942 of China and in 1945 of America; in 1946 it was going to be that of France. Patti seems to want us to believe that the US could have had the Vietnamese Communists on its side in the Cold War if he had had his way in 1945. At what Stefan Zweig called "Sternstunden der Menschheit", it is sometimes subordinate figures who hold destiny in their hands - Grouchy at Waterloo, Patti at Hanoi.

The peak of Stalinism

By Ronald J. Hill

T. H. RIGBY, ARCHIE BROWN and PETER REDDAWAY (Editors):
Authority, Power and Policy in the USSR
Essays dedicated to Leonard Schapiro
207pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 25702 2

As Professor of Political Science with special reference to Russia at the USF from 1963 until 1973, Leonard Schapiro dominated Soviet political studies in Britain. In addition, through his voluminous writings - most notably his unsurpassed "biography" of the Soviet Communist Party (1960; 2nd edition 1970) - he earned a world reputation which ranked him alongside such scholars as the late Merle Fainsod and John Hazard, in a generation struggling to make sense of the horrors of Stalinism and to explain the Soviet Union to a perplexed world.

The scope and range of these essays and the reputations of their authors - some of whom are long-established authorities, while others are now beginning to make their mark as "professional students" of Soviet affairs (a phrase once used by Schapiro about himself) - bear witness to the tremendous impact Schapiro has made on successive generations of graduate students, and to the affection with which his former pupils and colleagues regard him.

This is a fine volume, combining essays of impeccable scholarship and polish with more argumentative pieces - it is incidentally a good advertisement for the standard of Russian and Soviet studies in British universities at a time when the discipline appears to be under serious threat. (All but two of the contributors are British-based.)

The various authors have each sought their own understanding of the complexity of Soviet political

life, and in some cases the points they emphasize differ markedly from those stressed in Schapiro's own work. Archie Brown's exploration of the political culture of Soviet society is a case in point. There is nevertheless a fitting unity about this collection, for all the contributors share a common focus on the theme that has so concerned Schapiro throughout his career: broadly stated, how the Soviet political system reached its peak under Stalin, and how (and how far) the features of "high Stalinism" have been maintained by his successors.

Thus Neil Harding, in examining Bukharin's arguments in favour of an "industrialized state", explores the theoretical debate which produced a justification for Stalin's system. Richard Taylor examines the development of the propaganda media, notably the cinema, which were used to inculcate acceptance of the system in a largely illiterate and poor country. Alec Nove, in characteristically combative style, focuses on central planning - a key element in the Stalin "model", but one whose usefulness has increasingly been questioned in the communist world, despite what Nove sees as the naïve faith in its effectiveness on the part of Trotskyites and others. Graeme Gill focuses on the cult of the leader, as a means of acquiring the political authority which Stalin's organizational capacity alone could not confer. Anthony Kemp-Welch records the effective destruction of scholarship as a potential counterweight to the irrationality which characterized Stalin's rule, while T. H. Rigby argues persuasively, in his Western analysis of the basis of authority in the Soviet Union, that the nature of "rationality" in the Soviet system needs to be carefully examined if we are to understand the Soviet approach to power.

Moving on from the Stalin period, Archie Brown traces the apparent decline in the real power of the top party office, after Stalinism reached its peak at the time of the Second World War, and incidentally draws perceptive comparisons with British prime ministers). And finally Peter

Reddaway - whose essay is less an interpretation than a meticulous account of recent policy - focuses on dissent, which he sees as a touchstone of how far the Soviet leaders have moved away from Stalinist assumptions and methods.

The essays complement one another and are ably tied together in Rigby's theoretical chapter. However, they provide more insight into the way the Soviet system has developed in the past than into its present functioning or its future, and tend to concentrate on the most distasteful features of that system. The assumption, expressly stated by Reddaway, that the present Soviet leaders base their methods of rule on axioms dating from Lenin's time, really needs to be demonstrated (and, indeed, that assumption, if accurate, has depressing implications for the prospect of political change in the future).

But the more complex analysis of policy-making implied in Reddaway's analytical chapter (page 185) points to a potentially more fruitful approach to understanding the Soviet system. This would need to take into account not only precedents and traditions, and the views of various individual and institutional actors, but also the profound, interrelated problems which require resolution through public policy: Rigby is right in seeing policy as a process, carried on in several areas simultaneously.

At a time when ideology in politics and value-judgments in the social sciences are equally unfashionable, this volume serves to remind us of two important truths. Schapiro's own outstanding contribution demonstrates the first of these: that a concern for values does not conflict with the highest standards of scholarship. The second truth, of which Rigby again reminds us, is that ideology retains its significance in Soviet politics. The present leaders are committed to the building of communism, however remote and uncertain its appearance may be; they are not simply anxious to retain power for its own (or their own) sake, but wish to do something positive with it, a point that is too frequently discounted.

Business studies

By Alan Bold

IAN J. BURTON:
The Runner
145pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson £6.50
0 297 77986 9

The first novel is a literary phenomenon of little interest to the general public, but of intense significance to critics. Novelty, aptly enough, is an essential ingredient of the first novel: if the writer makes a favourable impression he may be required, subsequently, to produce a planned sequence rather than a solitary sequel. For failure to do so he can be cruelly written off as an omnibus novelist.

Ian Burton's first novel, *Out of Season*, was a New Fiction Society Choice and an object of general critical admiration. He is already working on his third novel and offers this, his second, as a fair example of the kind of art he is practising. *The Runner* is not in any sense an experimental or exploratory work. An assured narrative on a contemporary theme, it is shaped by convention and sustained by inside knowledge.

At thirty-two Burton is the same age as Neil Telford, one of the principal leading men in his novel, and there is a strong autobiographical element in the story. Burton is Birmingham-born while the unspecified urban setting of the novel is impersonal enough to suit his native place: "the city... the glittering towers and the on-off neon strips... the back alleys... the suburbs". Before he became a novelist Burton worked in a factory, first as a labourer then as a white-collar worker spiralling upwards into business studies. Throughout this book there is an authentic awareness of the hierarchy of the factory system and an emphasis on the sacred importance of official status.

Initially the book reads like an account of the factory treadmill, with its dehumanizing pressures and intolerable strain. The old ideal of men mastering machines has been transformed: the men in this novel are at the mercy of machines. Four men, in particular, have submerged their personalities so totally that they are in danger of acquiring forever the mere labels that define the departments they run. Neil Telford is Advertising, Alan Henson is Production, Edgar Broughton is Sales and David Myers is Despatch. This competitive quartet play the game by the rules laid down for them. They live, virtually, in and for the factory which is also "a village, a bloody eight to five village". Life outside the factory is alarming in its unplanned flexibility. Each of the leading men, therefore, has a serious emotional problem and each problem is systematically examined as the novel progresses.

Thematically, Ian Burton has built his book around the popular metaphor of remunerative work as a rat-race. Burton's principals are running for all they are worth. Simultaneously they are haunted by the symbolic figure of the eponymous Runner, who runs for his life in a commercially competitive race. The book opens with tears being shed over the "latest victim of this race": the Factory Supervisor has died of sheer exhaustion - yet the others continue to run, undeterred by this obstacle, if anything they go faster for there is the possibility of internal promotion. This makes it immensely difficult for the four main characters to deal with the personal crises in their lives: their various attempts to do so give the book its tension and edge.

Burton's prose has three quite different textures. First, there is his use of hyperbole: "He glanced at his watch. The digital figures throbbed on his wrist, directly into his bloodstream, as if it was minutes and seconds being pumped around his body. But time does not congregate. It runs, circulating around clock faces. Second, there is his symbolism: "Here is a man... Here is the Runner yesterday's runner, breaking clear. But is he hunter or hunted? He runs in pursuit of the silhouette riders."

The silhouette horsemen - pieces of night on horseback - running with the speed of time - for tomorrow." Last, there is the naturalistic prose that carries the burden of the narrative: "She squeezed the washing-up liquid into the bowl and watched the hot water swirl up the bubbles. She worked slowly and steadily, concentrating on the task."

If that three-in-one stylistic salutation sounds too pat and neatly packaged for imaginative fiction then that is a prejudice Burton can cope with. Still, there is an identikit appearance about parts of the novel - perhaps as a result of the risk the author was willing to take in his desire to produce a prose equivalent of the tedious factory life. He eschews the panoramic method but instead focuses on

Knights in blue denim

By Stoddard Martin

RICHARD PECK:
New York Time
220pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0 575 03011 9

Barbara Renfrew is a thirty-eight-year-old housewife in an upper middle-class suburb on Chicago's North Side. Barbara married her college sweetheart at the end of her senior year and thus missed the era of "alternative lifestyles". Barbara's husband, Tom, now an insurance executive, was a "jock" in college and a frat-man and adheres to pre-1960s values, including the one that adultery must remain covert. The Renfrews are childless. Barbara's days are taken up cataloguing the brand names of accoutrements in her neighbours' houses. Suburban Chicago receives the treatment Cyn McFadden gave Marlin County in *The Serial*. Then one evening Tom announces that the insurance company is transferring him to New York; Barbara's quiet life will never be the same.

The title of this book refers to the setting; the theme is not New York but much as the lifestyle New Yorkers like Barbara Walters have been purveying as fashionable lately: older woman, younger man. Shortly after they have exchanged their North Shore Tudor for an East Side Co-op, Tom announces to Barbara that he is in love with their ex-neighbour, Marlene Millsap, and is going back to Chicago to be with her. Left alone in the Gothic metropolis, Barbara is soon reduced to pounding her head on the floor. Fortunately for her, this is the world of fiction, where an

Empty-handed

By Julia Briggs

MAURICE RENARD:
The Hands of Orca
Translated by Iain White
301pp. Souvenir. £6.95.
0 285 62461 X

Maurice Renard's novel, *The Hands of Orca*, tells the story of a famous concert pianist who loses his hands in a railway accident and has them successfully grafted back on. But are they really his? Unlikely though such an operation still seems, sixty years after the book was written, the idea itself is a powerful one and it is dramatized very effectively as a silent film with Conrad Veidt, and rather less memorably on two subsequent occasions. None of the film versions can convey how closely the novel conforms to the grand grafted convention, employing three different interpretations of its events: one apparently supernatural, including ghosts, vanishing daggers and visible nightmares; a second rational but measure beyond belief; and the last

a few interiors, introduces a minimum of locations, and indulges in one or two flashbacks. The result resembles relief-work. Telford, Henson, Broughton and Myers are interchangeable products of the factory system; ambition unites them and only age-difference divides them.

Perhaps Ian Burton's greatest strength is his ability to bring an other-worldly atmosphere to his ostensibly realistic situations. Workday pressures are familiar enough to most readers; in *The Runner* reality is frequently seen from the viewpoint of the disturbed dreamer afraid to wake up into an everyday nightmare. Burton demonstrates considerable technical skill in a novel which must be classed as an impressive - though not record-breaking - performance.

Ed Kimbell is a twenty-three-year-old graduate of Cornell, with an MA in horticulture. At one point Barbara refers to him as a *Playgirl* centrefold; at another a giggling waitress asks him if anyone has ever told him he looks like John Denver. Ed turns the sooty roof of the Co-op into an enchanting garden and beleaguers Barbara into a blooming, feuding mother and wife. It's an old gag of female uptightness being transformed by male sensuality; only Ed is a housebroken, adorable Stanley Kowalski, and Barbara has a wit entirely beyond Stella, or Blanche Dubois for that matter. Tennessee Williams' phallic-workshop lurks in the shadows; that there isn't nothing wrong with a dame that can't be remedied by the love of a potent man is the neo-1950s message.

New York Times has been written by formula for the woman's magazine market. The prose is facile, witty, compulsive. The continual references to high school, TV, and brand names make a homey omnibus for middle-brow American housewives. The development from suburbia to city, marriage to affair, lack-of-confidence to fulfiling tendency to common fantasy. Real and painful problems like separation, divorce, parenthood for a single mother, ageing and death are "solved" with miraculous flippancy. This book was written by Madison Avenue: it has the sheen and wit of the best advertising prose, and pushes the same optimistic humbug.

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Involving a complex confidence trick accompanied by unlikely tricks and disguises. All must be congruent, however far-fetched or inadequately motivated, and the total effect is not unlike that of a showy but unimpassioned conjuror's aria.

It is, perhaps, a little hard to judge only from a translation, but Renard's style seems as elaborately and implausibly Gothic as his plotting; his fondness for rhetorical questions, exclamations and similar picturesque figures of speech produces a somewhat indigestible result. Here, for example, is part of a description of an old-fashioned gramophone: "From the fearsome, gaping horn, from the enormous convoluted flower that exhaled sounds rather than odours, the clamorous spectre of a time that was dead and gone burst ceaselessly forth... Ohi! The melancholy, the fantastic melancholy of that invention that freezes sound!... The huge black flower, the monstrous flower that had plucked its roots into the tomb, could long have had a more profound effect." Seldom, one might think, has the dead hand of Edgar Allan Poe lain so heavily across the pages of his disciples.

Brotherly love

By Christopher Edwards

PAT MCGRATH:
Stray Cats from a Wayward World
220pp. W. H. Allen. £7.95.
0 491 02498 3

When we first meet Nicholas, the main character of Pat McGrath's novel, he is neither stony nor wayward. The adopted son of a suburban couple from Essex, he chooses law as the career most likely to lift him above his lower-middle-class background. Studious and ambitious, he becomes an articled clerk in a well-known firm of City solicitors, Marlon Marbyss & Co.

Suddenly a mysterious young man, who refuses to leave any message, tries to make contact with him. When they do meet, Nicholas is amazed to discover that the caller is his younger brother, Tom, adopted as a baby by a Liverpool working-class family. Tom is scruffy, vaguely left-wing, uneducated (but well read), unemployed; he smokes dope, writes poetry, lives in a squat in Hackney and has been "inside". It is not clear how far McGrath realizes that Tom, for all his on-the-roadist spontaneity, is as much of a stereotype as his petit-bourgeois, pin-striped brother, but the formal contrast between them is clear enough. "I approve of social mobility," Nick says. "I wouldn't waste me time with all that (sic) status bollocks". Tom replies. Nevertheless, they become friends, intrigued, in part, by the realization that their roles could so easily have been reversed.

Through his relations with Tom, Nick is introduced to life in modern urban England: drug abuse (Tom's girlfriend is in a Drug Rehabilitation Unit), unemployment (Tom's foster father has lost his job on Merseyside), inadequate housing, etc. McGrath is clearly a novelist who "cores". Such issues can, of course, disclose material which would be the proper concern of an author. The objection to them here is that they appear to be no more than items snatched from a social worker's list.

Still, as new data in Nick's experience, they succeed in altering his attitudes more than would, say, a share transfer deal in the Cayman Islands. When Tom is charged with murder Nick helps prepare the defence. The Old Bailey trial which follows is predictable rather than tense, although McGrath does handle the conventions of courtroom drama competently enough - the obtuseness of the Judge, the despotism of the Prosecution Counsel, the dismay in the gallery when the impossible verdict is returned. The trial is also the key moment in Nick's development, the catalyst which changes him from a City solicitor into a Law Centre counsellor.

The author eventually brings about Tom's acquittal through a tired old device, but it is the style of writing which really kills the book: a monochrome relaying of facts and feelings, top heavy with platitudes. True, on occasions McGrath gives a new angle to a hackneyed phrase so that it catches the light: "I woke up with eagles in my guts rather than butterflies". He also succeeds in suggesting something of the plausible infallibility of the traditional police dick in the figure of Goldenberg, the managing clerk in Nick's office. Apart from this, though, the novel hardly rises above the level of a dramatized case history; after finishing it I wasn't sure whether to return it to the bookshelf or to the filing-cabinet.

The general impression this year's stories provide is of a craft practised capably but unambitiously. The stories tend to be well-written and well-observed but, finally, not very exciting. There are, however, exceptions. James Campbell in "The Half Battle of Champagne" is the Enemy of Man" contributes a robustly comic portrayal of a young writer's relationship with his landlord, who is profusely abusive about his lodger's literary abilities ("You can't even write poetry" with *The Oxford Book of Verse* and a sheet of tragic paper), and who has a drunkenly loyal - but inglorious - acquaintance with the "greats" of twentieth-century literature. Robin Jenkins, in "She Had to Laugh", writes effectively and with great economy about a skinny Glasgow tart who serves the American sailors from the Holy Loch; she accepts a postal offer of marriage from an erstwhile client in order to escape her drab and unhappy existence only to find living in an isolated gas station in the middle of a Californian desert. The fact that the two best stories come from, respectively, the youngest and the oldest contributors may, one hopes, say something about the country's strength-in-depth.

This all-embracingness is to the series' great advantage. Residential qualifications allow the publication of "Seppoi" by Jackson Webb (an American) which is about the mayor of a small village on a Greek island. Scottish blood permits the inclusion of Giles Gordon's story about a tourist's encounter with a Kashmiri beggar in the foothills of the Himalayas. There are stories which take place in England (Richard Fletcher's "Don't Look in the Garden"), in neutral landscapes (Elspeth Davis's "Kiosk Encounters", Iain Crichton Smith's "Chirico's Return") and in America (Robin Jenkins's "She Had to Laugh"). Generally speaking, any tone of a nationalistic folk-literature is happily absent.

The overall policy of this worthwhile series (now to its ninth year) continues much as before: a blend of reliable, familiar names and the work of lesser-known and younger writers; though, as Willis Pickard stresses in his preface, the final obligation has always been to publish the best of the stories submitted each year. This year the submissions totalled, so we are informed, approximately one hundred and thirty, of which the final eighteen were chosen. On the face of it, this seems to be a remarkably low number,

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The invisible border

By William Boyd

Scottish Short Stories 1981
196pp. Collins. £6.25.
0 00 222400 3

The "Scottishness" of this collection is a form of convenient shorthand. Anyone expecting the literary equivalent of Highland games or malt whisky - as the freeze of stylized thistles on the front might encourage them to - is going to be disappointed. All eighteen stories do have links with Scotland in one way or another, but in some cases this means nothing more than the fact that the story was written north of the border, or that the writer is of Scottish descent.

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Friends of the National Libraries

By John Foggles

The Friends of the National Libraries was founded fifty years ago to give to libraries and record offices the same kind of support which museums and art galleries received from the National Art Collections Fund. To celebrate its golden jubilee an appeal has been launched. If the society is to fulfil its purposes it is vital that its funds be increased and many more members enrolled. Its fellows has always been small, the number of members never as high as a thousand, yet its achievements have been remarkable. The earliest were, indeed, spectacular. The Friends led the campaign to secure the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Paston Letters* for the Library of the British Museum, in the latter case subscribing three-quarters of the cost. In the 1930s the museum, the chief beneficiary of the Friends' generosity at that time, received many remarkable gifts: the manuscript of Trollope's autobiography, the remaining manuscripts of Wilfred Owen's poems, and a number of important sixteenth-century English books.

Since the war the work of the Friends has changed in several important ways. The number of institutions that have benefited has increased enormously: more than two hundred of them up and down the country have received outright gifts or grants towards acquisitions. At the same time the support given to the larger libraries has become small. In some cases only nominal, though the society has continued to lead or give support to appeals on their behalf, and has continued to act as the channel through which collections have passed to them: the Henry Davis bequest came to the British Library in this way and parts of the Broxbourne Library were presented to the British Library, the Bodleian, and the Cambridge University Library. The grants of money the Friends are able to make to these institutions are now very small in relation to the much increased purchase grants available from government funds. Yet Treasury grants are not always large enough, especially in the urgent and unpredictable conditions of the sale rooms and sometimes even a small contribution is useful. Towards the £42,000 necessary to buy the Wordsworth and Coleridge manuscripts for Dove Cottage the Friends could give only £750, but that was a large proportion of the society's income. The appeal which the Friends led, however, elicited £18,000 from an anonymous benefactor which made the acquisition possible.

Membership has remained at much the same level during fifty years when the constituency from which it should be drawn has expanded enormously. The growth of historical and literary studies at the universities has very much increased the numbers of people to whom membership would be an appropriate demonstration of gratitude for the services and resources of a wide range of research collections, all of them in need of support. Although subscriptions have increased, they have not kept pace with inflation - particularly not with the inflation in the price of books and manuscripts.

In recent years the most valuable work the society has done has been to make small, but strategically effective, grants to local record offices. With the aid too of money made available from the government's Purchase Grant Fund, such repositories have been able to mop up, usually at auction, single items or small groups of documents of local interest which are best kept with more of the same in the locality to which they refer.

But the Friends must not be content with performing this function alone, so much less ambitious than the work of the founders of the society. The phrase "the national heritage" is used a good deal nowadays as a catchphrase, but it is especially applicable to several classes of

books and manuscripts intimately bound up with the history and traditions of the nation; and these books and manuscripts are now in particular danger. A number of collections of family papers on deposit in local record offices or libraries have recently been withdrawn by their owners and sold at auction, generally for very large sums. It is difficult not to believe there will be many more sold in the next twenty years. Other collections, still in private hands, are also being put on the market, generally to settle the liabilities of capital transfer tax. These sales are not reprehensible, but they are unfortunate. They can all too easily lead to the dispersal of historically important collections. It goes without saying that a collection relating to one family, or to the administration of estates in one area is of much greater value if it is kept together. But it is likely to be scattered if it is sold at auction.

The fiscal advantages of sales by private treaty to national or local repositories, benefiting as they do both seller and buyer, have sometimes ensured the survival of a collection intact in its place of deposit. These advantages should be made even greater and one hopes that the Government will see the need to increase them. In general terms, though, the current situation is bleak. Many record repositories have only a few hundred pounds a year to spend. Even the largest and best-endowed libraries cannot easily raise the necessary sums. What they certainly cannot do is raise them repeatedly. The time is not propitious, moreover, for institutions supported by public funds to ask for large amounts of extra money from government or local authorities.

In this situation the Friends of the National Libraries have a special part to play. They do not believe that the only people who care about this part of our heritage are the small number of loyal supporters already enrolled in the society. They

By Masolino D'Amico

FRANCO TRALLI (Editor):
Catalogo nazionale dei premi letterari 1981
114pp. Bologna: Seledizioni. L. 11,000.

Italians are often questioned about their literary prizes: how many are offered, how valuable they really are, and so on. No one knows all the answers, and such institutions are often described collectively as a "jungle". For a brief period, after 1968, Italian writers felt it to be beneath their dignity to accept prize money; but things soon returned to normal. Italo Calvino refused the Viareggio prize (worth five million lire at the time) in 1969, but accepted the similarly endowed Premio Feltrinelli three years later. The "jungle" is bravely if not exhaustively mapped yearly in Bologna and the *Catalogo nazionale dei premi letterari* has now reached its seventh edition: readers are even provided with a telephone number to ring if they want last-minute information. This small paperback may seem expensive, but as the editors sensibly point out, if one were to write to all the institutions they describe, in order to learn the terms of the prizes they offer, it would cost more than 80,000 lire in postage stamps alone.

The catalogue is simply a list of the 413 literary prizes awarded each year. Of these, 174 are arranged chronologically by closing dates; 14 competitions close in January, 21 in February, 16 in March, and so on. These are the competitions, open to anyone, about which the editors found sufficient information: they are thus given the place of honour. Three appendices follow: one lists 134 prizes about which the editors discovered fewer details (would-be competitors who wish to learn more are advised to write to the secretaries of each prize committee); a second lists 88 prizes about which even less information is available; and a final appendix wistfully lists 17 prizes not open to self-promoters - awards, that is, that can only be given to work recommended by members of the jury.

Most of the major, long-established and best-known awards are here: the *Venice-based Premio Campiello*, for instance, in which 12 literary gurus select 22 works of fiction; the choice - in public discussions - of winners from among these, a "super-winner" being subsequently picked by a "popular jury" of voters; the *Premio Strega*, for which runners must be "introduced" by "Friends" of the "salotto Bellondo" - a literary salon which used to be a Sunday meeting place for intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s and then voted on by a few hundred such "friends" (ballot cards are distributed according to mysterious criteria); the

are anxious to attract donations and particularly anxious to attract new members, to bring in more revenue and provide the confidence which the lack of a large membership gives. The Friends believe they can act as a focus for the sympathies of all these anxious to preserve our heritage in books and manuscripts.

The time is at hand. Please join the Friends and help the society to continue and extend its good work.

The minimum annual subscription, if convenient and paid by bank standing order, is only £4. Forms for joining or making donations will gladly be supplied by the Honorary Secretary at The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1. He will be pleased to answer any questions about the work of the Society.

at least for prose or poetry, on the subjects of crime, sport (this award is offered by CONI, Italy's Olympic Committee), the Resistance, wine (1 million lire, offered by the magazine *Enochobby*), bureaucracy (the "Travel" prize, offered for a short story dealing with the office or family life of a civil servant), camping, peasant life, fun-fairs (3 million lire, to a newspaper story or television script dealing with "the social, cultural, and ecological functions of fun-fairs" offered by Luneur, Rome's biggest amusement park). There is even a prize inscribed to Il Mediceo Poete, for a poem composed by a practising doctor - eotrics to be submitted in typescript on prescription sheets.

So far, you might think that Signor Tralli's catalogue makes fascinating reading. But unfortunately the great majority of the prizes he lists are less

colourful; in fact most do not aspire to originality at all. Eight out of ten competitions invite the submission of a poem, a group of poems, or a short story - unpublished, not too long, and often, in the vernacular - of any kind, provided that its author is prepared to pay a fee (generally a "reading fee", of about £3 - £5 for each entry. Furthermore, most of these announcements do not promise a precise amount of cash for the winners; some vaguely promise "works of art", or medals, as well as glory. Ennio Flaiano used to say that no Italian ever reads a book, but that every Italian is always writing one. If this is true, and if a simple proposition of these mute, inglorious Dantes seize their opportunity, one may be led to suspect that others, besides writers, publishers and booksellers, stand to profit from "literature".

Mr Davis gives us descriptive notes on each of the literary manuscripts, fiction and non-fiction, adding references to the detailed textual work that has been done on some of them by himself and other American scholars. A short section details the significantly annotated books from Waugh's library, including *The Unquiet Grave* with pungent marginalia that deserve detailed attention from students of Conrad and Waugh alike. Not all publications details are up to date: references to items published in Donat Gallagher's *A Little Order* might have been welcome, and information about omissions from Michael Davies' *Diary* text (indications of passages left out for "literary" or "humanitarian reasons") could have been inserted.

Mark Amory's edition of the Letters was only a selection of the available material, but this catalogue apparently went to press before it was published, so no details could be given of which letters were included. The core of the catalogue is a calendar of all the Waugh letters at Austin, the bulk of them to A. D. Peters and his business associates. Many of the letters are only postcards, but it is clear even from the necessarily deadening paraphrases ("Ask whether H. G. Wells had intercourse with Mrs W. Jacobs", etc.) that Waugh could pack a great deal of economically expressed prose on to a single card, and the 1,255 listed communications sent to his agent over thirty-five years are a formidable series. Davis dutifully lists them all, but scarcely mentions that they are to be found in seven large transfer boxes of the firm's Waugh files, with carbon copies of reply letters and all their other incoming correspondence about Waugh's literary affairs. Taken

as a whole, these Peters files form as yet an under-exploited biographical and bibliographical source. Potential scholars should not be misled by Davis's catalogue into thinking that the Peters letters consist mainly of items by Waugh himself. They would form an admirable source for the comprehensive bibliography, preferably with the range and rigour of the Soho series, that is so urgently needed.

Although the catalogue has been so long in preparation, it bears many signs of having been too hastily seen through the press, and is awash with literal misprints. The *Sunday Telegraph*, may be an abbreviated *Alfred* edition, and "Dame Ethel Smith" of the very first entry was certainly a high-octane, volatile personality. Clearly much more remains to be told of the Humanities Research Center's Waugh collection than is vouchsafed to us in this catalogue part of it.

A Bibliography of Printed Works Relating to Oxfordshire by E. H. Cordes and D. H. Merry (189pp. Oxford University Press. Clarendon Press. £8.50.) which has recently been published as New Series Volume XXVIII is a supplementary volume to New Series Volume XI which was published in 1955. Works on the University and the City of Oxford are not included. The books are classified in general subjects such as "Natural History", "Topography", "Social History" and "Religion" and under more specific subjects within the general classification. Newspapers, directories, almanacs and books on individual localities are covered in the volume. There is an Index of Subjects and a general index.